Received: 19 February 2021 | Revised: 4 October 2021 | Accepted: 26 November 2021

DOI: 10.1111/jomf.12817

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Journal of Marriage and Family

Parental involvement in stepfamilies: Biology, relationship type, residence, and gender

Ece Arat | **Anne-Rigt Poortman** | **Tanja van der Lippe**

Department of Sociology, Utrecht University, Utrecht, The Netherlands

Correspondence
Ece Arat, Department of Sociology, Utrecht University, Padualaan 14, 3584 CH Utrecht, The Netherlands.
Email: e.arat@uu.nl

Funding information
Medium Investments Fund of the Dutch Research Council (NWO), Grant/Award Number: 480-10-015; Utrecht University; Dutch Research Council (NWO), Grant/Award Number: VI.C.181.024

Abstract

Objective: This study investigates the determinants of parental involvement in diverse types of stepfamilies.

Background: Most research has studied parental involvement in married stepfather families with resident children. This study also includes some of the more recent and emerging stepfamily types (e.g., living-apart-together [LAT] stepfamilies) allowing for a simultaneous examination of the role of biological relatedness, type of relationship, residence, and gender for parental involvement. It also examines whether the role of biological relatedness differs depending on parents' gender and children's residence.

Method: Multiple regression analyses were conducted using the New Families in the Netherlands (NFN) survey, large-scale data collected among divorced and separated parents with minor children (2015/16; $N = 3218$).

Results: Biological parents were more involved than stepparents (i.e., a stepgap was observed). This stepgap was smallest in married stepfamilies, followed by cohabiting stepfamilies and LAT stepfamilies, respectively. (Step)parents with resident children were more involved than those with nonresident children, with involvement being higher for full-time resident children than part-time resident (i.e., joint physical custody) children. The stepgap was larger for resident children than nonresident children, but did not differ between mothers and fathers.

Conclusion: Biological relatedness, type of relationship, and where children reside are important determinants of parental involvement, whereas more nuance is required for the role of parents' gender.

Abbreviations: LAT, living-apart-together; *M*, mean; NFN, New Families in the Netherlands; Ref, reference; SD, standard deviation; SE, standard error.

KEYWORDS
child custody, childhood, family structure, gender, parent involvement, stepfamilies

INTRODUCTION

The increase in divorce and repartnering has led to more children living in stepfamilies (Smock & Schwartz, 2020). These children have been found to fare generally worse than children living with two biological parents on many outcomes such as their school achievements or psychological well-being (Sweeney, 2010). Lower parental involvement in stepfamilies is considered to be an important reason for this discrepancy (Carlson, 2006; Coleman et al., 2000; Thomson et al., 1994). Parents' engagement in parent–child activities is, generally speaking, important for beneficial child outcomes (Flouri & Buchanan, 2003; Wilder, 2014), although optimum levels of stepparents' involvement may vary across stepfamilies (Jensen, 2021). As children in stepfamilies are likely at a disadvantage in terms of parental involvement than those in non-divorced families, it is important to understand which factors contribute to this lower parental involvement.

Lower levels of parental involvement in stepfamilies are typically argued to arise from the lower involvement of stepparents vis-à-vis biological parents: they provide less care and feel less emotionally close (Hofferth & Anderson, 2003; King, 2006, 2007). This discrepancy in parental engagement is also referred to as the "stepgap" (DeLongis & Preece, 2002). Another explanation points at residence: nonresident biological parents' involvement decreases after divorce because they no longer live full-time with their children (Hawkins et al., 2006). The residence explanation is often coined as competing with the argument on biology in the debate about what determines the strength of parent–child ties (Kalmijn et al., 2019): is it biological relatedness—suggesting that biological parents continue to be most important after divorce—or residence—suggesting that resident stepparents may be more important than nonresident biological parents? Finally, gender and the type of relationship between the stepparent and biological parent may matter. The stepgap has been found to be larger for mothers than fathers, and cohabiting stepparents seem less involved than married stepparents (Berger et al., 2008; Ivanova, 2017).

Previous research has so far focused on married stepfather families as these have been the most common type of stepfamilies (Sweeney, 2010). This means first that we know empirically less about parental involvement in newer and emerging stepfamily types (Raley & Sweeney, 2020). Stepfamilies have become increasingly diverse as cohabitation has become more common and "living-apart-together (LAT)" relationships are particularly popular after a divorce (Guzzo, 2017; Liefbroer et al., 2015). Increasing numbers of divorced parents opting for joint physical custody add to this diversity (Meyer et al., 2017; Poortman & Van Gaalen, 2017). Although recent research also includes cohabiting step(father)families (e.g., Berger et al., 2008; Hofferth & Anderson, 2003; Jensen, 2019, 2021) or examines biological parents' involvement in joint custody arrangements (e.g., Bastaits & Pasteels, 2019), LAT stepfamilies (but see Gibson-Davis, 2008) and stepparents' involvement in joint custody arrangements have, to our knowledge, rarely been examined.

Second, with respect to the determinants of parental involvement, research has most often examined the stepgap. By including mostly stepfather families, the stepgap has typically been studied for (resident) fathers. In the rare case that stepmothers are included, often only resident (step)parents are studied (e.g., Ivanova, 2017), which is uncommon in the case of stepmothers given that most children go live with the mother after divorce. Furthermore, the role of residence has mostly been examined for biological and not stepparents' involvement (e.g., Hawkins et al., 2006). The evidence is thus fragmented and specific, and the inclusion of only some stepfamily types has precluded a simultaneous examination of the role of biological relatedness, residence, and gender.

In this study, we examine parental involvement of biological parents and stepparents in a more diverse range of stepfamilies than previous research has done. Besides married resident stepfamilies, our study also includes cohabiting and LAT stepfamilies and stepfamilies with part-time resident (in case of joint physical custody) or nonresident children. This study, thus, first goes beyond previous research by offering a more complete picture of parental involvement in stepfamilies, including some of the more recent and emerging stepfamily types. Second, we address the role of residence, biological relatedness, type of relationship, and gender more conclusively than most previous research has been able to do. By including a wider range of stepfamilies, we establish the role of these determinants beyond specific stepfamily types only and are able to simultaneously examine them to assess their relative importance. Such analyses have, as far as we are aware, only been possible in studies about (step)parents' ties to adult children (Arránz Becker et al., 2013; Kalmijn et al., 2019). Third, we examine the interplay between biological relatedness, gender, and residence. Most research included resident stepfamilies only, but the stepgap may be larger in case of nonresidence as the greater opportunities for parent–child interaction in case of co-residence with the child may particularly increase the involvement of stepparents (Van Houdt et al., 2018). By studying whether the stepgap varies across residence arrangements, our study shows how opportunities for involvement shape (step)parents' behavior and whether earlier findings based on resident stepfamilies can be generalized to other stepfamily types, which is important given the increased diversity in stepfamilies. We furthermore study whether the stepgap is indeed bigger for mothers than for fathers, also when (step)parents with nonresident or part-time resident children are included. Earlier studies attributed the bigger stepgap for mothers to the greater ambiguity of the stepmother role given the primacy of biological mothers in childrearing (Ganong & Coleman, 2017). The rise in joint physical custody and the more general shift to egalitarian gender roles may have reduced this ambiguity, thus perhaps reducing the gender dynamics in the stepgap.

We use data from the survey "New Families in the Netherlands" (NFN) held among Dutch divorced parents with minor children (Poortman et al., 2014, 2018). This recent dataset covers a wide range of stepfamilies, including relatively large numbers of cohabiting and LAT stepfamilies as well as those with joint physical custody. Note that same-sex couples with children are also an important part of growing diversity in stepfamily forms (Ganong & Coleman, 2018). We, however, had to preclude such families due to their limited sample size. NFN has detailed information about various forms of parental involvement, ranging from more routine activities (e.g., dropping child off at school or sports) to leisure activities (e.g., going on outings with the child) for the biological parent and their partner (i.e., stepparents). These data thus allow for a statistically powerful analysis of the role of biological relatedness, residence, relationship type, and gender in contemporary stepfamilies.

The role of biological relatedness and type of relationship for parental involvement

From an evolutionary perspective, having one's biological child and investing in that child are considered as a strategy to continue one's bloodline (Schnettler & Steinbach, 2011). Parents thus tend to be more involved with their biological children than their stepchildren as a reproductive strategy (Daly & Wilson, 1980). The role of biology is also explained by the incomplete institutionalization in stepfamilies, meaning that parental roles in stepfamilies are less clear than in non-divorced families in terms of formal laws and social norms (Cherlin, 1978). This often results in ambiguity and uncertainty with regard to the stepparent's role in childrearing, such as the extent to which they should be involved (Cherlin, 1978; Fine, 1996).

As a corollary to Cherlin's institutionalization argument (Cherlin, 1978), biological parents' type of relationship with their partner (i.e., stepparent) is likely to affect stepparents' involvement.

Marriage increases the legitimacy of parental roles (Buchanan et al., 1996). It can, therefore, decrease the ambiguity of the stepparent's role and result in stepparents being more involved. Married couples are often also more committed to each other than cohabiting couples (Brines & Joyner, 1999; Sassler & Lichter, 2020) and even more so than LAT couples. Higher commitment may increase stepparents' feelings of family unity and encourage them to take more responsibility for childrearing. Because LAT stepparents do not live with their stepfamily, they furthermore lack opportunities to build strong parent–child relationships, likely leading to less involvement of stepparents (Kalmijn, 2013). We hypothesize that biological parents are more involved than stepparents (i.e., stepgap), with the involvement of stepparents being the highest in married stepfamilies, followed by cohabiting stepfamilies and LAT stepfamilies, respectively (H1).

Studies have consistently found evidence for a stepgap in parental involvement (e.g., Hofferth & Anderson, 2003; Ivanova, 2017). Research on other parent–child relationship characteristics, such as emotional closeness, and/or research focusing on adult children have also found support for the stepgap (e.g., Arránz Becker et al., 2013; Kalmijn, 2013; King, 2006, 2007). Furthermore, married stepparents have been found to be more involved than cohabiting stepparents (Berger et al., 2008; Carlson & Berger, 2013; Ivanova, 2017), whereas LAT stepfathers seem to be least involved (Gibson-Davis, 2008).

The role of residence for parental involvement

Living together with one's biological or stepchildren provides many opportunities to be highly involved due to daily and frequent interactions with the children (Kalmijn, 2013; King, 2006). When children do not reside in the household, (step)parents' opportunities for involvement are constrained by for example strict visitation schedules (Hawkins et al., 2006). (Step)parents might also feel more obliged to be involved in case of co-residence: social norms encourage parents to support children living in their household regardless of biological relatedness, as society often equates "households" with "families" (Ganong et al., 1995). We therefore expect (step)parents with resident children to be more involved than those with nonresident children. In the case of joint physical custody, children live with their (step)parents part-time as children spend about half of the time in the household of either parent. Parental involvement is thus assumed to fall in between that of resident (step)parents and that of nonresident parents. We hypothesize that parental involvement of (step)parents is the highest in stepfamilies with full-time resident children, followed by those with part-time resident children and nonresident children, respectively (H2).

Studies on biological parents have found that resident parents are more involved than nonresident parents (Bruce & Fox, 1999; Hawkins et al., 2006). Furthermore, biological parents with part-time resident children provide more support to their children than nonresident parents (Bastaits & Pasteels, 2019). Evidence for parents' relationships with adult children is mixed: some studies corroborate the positive effect of (past) co-residence on (step)parent–(step)child relationships (Kalmijn et al., 2019) or on norms about these relationships (Van Houdt et al., 2018), yet others find a negative effect of co-residence (Arránz Becker et al., 2013). The few studies that have been able to consider both residence and biological relatedness are also mixed in their findings: some suggested support for the primacy of residence (King, 2006, 2007) whereas others implied stronger effects of biological relatedness for parent–child ties (Arránz Becker et al., 2013; Van Houdt et al., 2018).

The interplay between biological relatedness and gender for parental involvement

Norms on childrearing are usually gendered, often emphasizing the prominent role of biological mothers in children's upbringing, whereas fathers are seen as more invested in their occupations

(Peterson et al., 2000). These strong norms on biological mothers could make the parenting role of stepmothers ambiguous (Ganong & Coleman, 2017; Ivanova, 2017). Due to these norms, stepmothers may be hesitant to take on childrearing responsibilities as they do not want to be seen as trying to usurp the role of the biological mother (Van Houdt et al., 2019). Children may also be reluctant toward the stepmother being an involved parenting figure (Van Houdt et al., 2019). Furthermore, women have been argued to have a "kin-keeping role" in (step)families suggesting that they facilitate better father-child relationships (Di Leonardo, 1987; Kalmijn, 2007). Biological mothers thus encourage their new partners (i.e., stepfathers) to be more involved with their children, whereas biological fathers might be less likely to do so with their new partners (i.e., stepmothers) (Kalmijn et al., 2019). This would imply a smaller stepgap for fathers than for mothers. Alternatively, biological mothers might act as gatekeepers and limit stepfathers' involvement with their children (Weaver & Coleman, 2010), suggesting the stepgap to be larger for fathers. Since most arguments and research findings (see below) suggest a larger stepgap for mothers, we hypothesize that the stepgap is larger for mothers than fathers (H3).

The limited research so far has found the stepgap in parental involvement to be indeed larger for mothers than for fathers (Ivanova, 2017). Studies on adult children and/or the quality of (step)children-(step)parent ties corroborate these findings (Arránz Becker et al., 2013; DeLongis & Preece, 2002; Kalmijn et al., 2019; Van Houdt et al., 2019).

The interplay between biological relatedness and residence for parental involvement

As discussed earlier, the role of stepparents in childrearing may be ambiguous because stepfamilies lack clear norms guiding their family interactions (Cherlin, 1978). Co-residence with stepchildren may, however, decrease this ambiguity because of stronger norms for (step)parents to be involved with children who reside in the household (Ganong et al., 1995). Stepparents may feel that they need to take on parental responsibilities for their resident children, leading to a smaller stepgap compared to a situation where children do not live with the stepparent or only part-time. Argued the other way around, the greater access to children and the increased opportunities for involvement that co-residence brings (Kalmijn, 2013) may be more important for stepparents' than for biological parents' involvement (Van Houdt et al., 2018). Whereas biological parents are normatively assumed to be highly involved regardless of residence, stepparents need to figure out distinct ways to build relationships with their stepchildren (Svare et al., 2004; Van Houdt et al., 2018). Greater opportunities to do so may help stepparents increase their involvement. We hypothesize that the stepgap is the smallest in stepfamilies with full-time resident children, followed by those with part-time resident children and nonresident children, respectively (H4).

The few previous studies have yielded mixed results. Arránz Becker et al. (2013) showed the stepgap in emotional closeness to be larger for resident children, whereas Van Houdt et al. (2018) found the coresidential history with stepparents to narrow the stepgap in norms for children to support their (step)parents.

METHODS

Data and sample

Our data came from the second wave of the survey of NFN which was collected in 2015/16 (Poortman et al., 2014, 2018; Poortman & Van Gaalen, 2019a, 2019b). We only used the second

wave as (step)parents' involvement was asked only in this wave. In collaboration with Statistics Netherlands, the sample for the first wave was randomly drawn among parents who dissolved their marriage or cohabitation in 2010. Both former partners were invited to participate in an online survey in 2012–2013 resulting in 4481 respondents. The response rate of the first wave was 39% among persons and 58% among households (Poortman et al., 2014). First-wave respondents who gave permission to do so were invited to participate in the second wave. The response rates were 63% among persons and 69% among households. For one fifth of former households, both ex-partners filled out the survey. Additionally, data from a refreshment sample were collected, with respondents being drawn from the same population as in the first wave. Response rates were 32% and 52% among persons and households, respectively, with 25% of former households where both ex-partners participated. Response rates are comparable to other family surveys conducted in the Netherlands. After combining respondents from the original sample ($n = 2544$) and the refreshment sample ($n = 920$), the total sample size of the second wave was 3464. For both waves and samples, former cohabiters, men, young people, those with a non-Western background, low income, and on welfare were underrepresented, whereas Dutch people, men with older children, and single men with children registered at their address were overrepresented. The group of formerly cohabiting respondents was slightly more selective. Among this group, men with two children were overrepresented whereas men with fewer children and women from the most urban areas were underrepresented. Additional analyses showed that first-wave respondents who were women, older, had higher socioeconomic status (e.g., high education), and life satisfaction were more likely to join the second wave (Poortman et al., 2018).

We excluded some cases in line with the aims of our study. Respondents were asked whether they had a steady partner, who is defined as someone with whom they were married, cohabited, or someone with whom they had a steady relationship but did not live together. We, first, excluded respondents who did not have such a partner ($n = 1301$). Second, we excluded same-sex couples ($n = 36$). In the second wave, parents reported about a focal child that was selected in the first wave based on child's age. If at least one of their children was 10 or older at the time of Wave 1, parents reported about the youngest child of 10 or older. If all their children were younger than 10, they were asked to report about their oldest child. For the refreshment sample, which took place about 3 years after the first wave, the cut-off of child's age was 13 for reasons of comparability with the original sample. As our measures of parental involvement are relevant for minor children who still lived with one of their biological parents, we excluded those who reported about a child aged 18 or older ($n = 399$). Cases where children had "other" residence than either of the parents' homes were also excluded ($n = 51$). Additionally, we excluded respondents with missing values on any of these filter variables ($n = 31$). Respondents reported about parental involvement of themselves (i.e., biological parents) and their current partner (i.e., stepparents). We, therefore, restructured the data so that every respondent added two observations; one for each type of parent. After the restructuring of the data, our sample included 3292 (step)parents from 1471 former households. Since the number of missing values on all variables amounted to only around 2% ($n = 74$), we used listwise deletion to handle the missing data which resulted in 3218 (step)parents from 1459 former households.

Measures of dependent and independent variables

Parental involvement

Respondents were asked how often during the last month they (i.e., biological parent) and their current partner (i.e., stepparent) spent time with the focal child in the following activities: having dinner together, helping with homework, talking about issues in the child's life, watching television, playing a game or doing crafts, doing leisure activities away from home, dropping

off or picking up the child, and doing household tasks together (see also e.g., Hawkins et al., 2006; Hofferth & Anderson, 2003). Responses ranged from 1 (*few times per day*) to 7 ([*almost*] *never*). There was also the response category "not applicable (e.g., child is too young or old)". If respondents chose this category, they were treated as missing on that particular item but were included if they had non-missing values on at least one of the other items. All items were reverse coded before constructing the average variable so that a higher score indicates higher involvement. This construct was found reliable (Cronbach's $\alpha = .932$). Additional analyses revealed that the "not applicable" category was most common for "helping with homework," "playing a game and/or doing crafts," and "dropping off/picking up" (ranging from 9 to 12%) and dependent upon the child's age: the "not applicable" option for "helping with homework" was more common for the youngest children (3–6 years) than older children, whereas the reverse was the case for "playing a game/doing crafts" and "dropping off/picking up." Yet, when these three items were deleted from the scale for parental involvement, the analyses yielded similar results.

Biological relatedness of parents and type of stepparent

The *stepparent* variable indicates biological relatedness of a parent to the focal child with 0 "*Biological parent*" and 1 "*Stepparent*." The *type of stepparent* variable is more detailed, showing also the type of relationship between the biological parent and the stepparent. Respondents were asked whether they lived with their partner, either married or not. Possible answers were "married," "cohabitation," or "living apart together (LAT)." Accordingly, we constructed three dummy variables to indicate the type of relationship (1 = *Yes*): *married*, *cohabiting*, *LAT*.

Children's residence

The respondents reported with whom the focal child lived most of the time. The answering categories were "with me", "about equally with both parents", "with ex-partner." We constructed three dummy variables to indicate whether children were *full-time resident* (i.e., with me), *part-time resident* (i.e., about equally with both parents), or *nonresident* (i.e., with ex-partner) (1 = *Yes*).

Gender of (step)parents

This was a dummy variable indicating if the (step)parent was a 0 "*Man*" or 1 "*Woman*."

Measures of control variables

We controlled for characteristics that have been found to be associated with our dependent and explanatory variables in the previous literature. For (step)parents' characteristics, we controlled for the *age of (step)parents* and the *level of education of (step)parents*. We rescaled the former (by dividing it by 10) to avoid very small estimates in the results tables. The latter was measured by asking respondents their and their partners' highest level of education (1 = *incomplete elementary school* to 10 = *postgraduate*). The information on the education level of respondents came from the first wave. We also controlled for the number of *working hours of (step)parents*, which was measured by asking respondents how many hours per week they and their current partner worked. Respondents who were not employed were coded as 0, whereas working hours of more than 80 h ($n = 3$) were recoded as 80 to prevent extreme values to have too much

influence on the analyses. For similar reasons as for age, we rescaled this variable by dividing it by 10. We, further, controlled for whether the focal child had any siblings. For *biological siblings*, respondents were asked how many children they had with their ex-partner. This information came from the first wave. For *half-siblings*, respondents were asked if they had a child with their current partner (1 = *Yes*). For *stepsiblings*, respondents were, first, asked if their current partner (i.e., stepparent) had other child(ren) from a previous relationship and if yes, whether these children were (full-time or part-time) residing in the household. Based on these two questions, we constructed three dummy variables (1 = *Yes*): *no stepsibling(s)*, *resident stepsibling(s)*, *nonresident stepsibling(s)*. Moreover, we controlled for *former union type of the respondents* (0 = *Cohabitation*, 1 = *Married/registered partnership*) and whether they were from the *refreshment sample* (0 = *Original sample*, 1 = *Refreshment sample*). Finally, we controlled for the *child's age* and *gender* (0 = *Boy*, 1 = *Girl*). The descriptive statistics of all variables in the analyses are presented in Table 1; see Table S1 for cell sizes.

Analytical strategy

We performed multiple linear regression on the restructured data, while taking into account that our data was clustered at the former household level (i.e., when both ex-partners took part in the survey). We did so by clustering the standard errors at the former household level (with the option "vce (cluster)" in Stata). Note that our data is clustered also at the stepfamily household level since parental involvement of both the biological parent and stepparent pertains to the same focal child. A three-level multilevel analyses, however, yielded no unique variance left for the highest level of analyses (i.e., former household level), likely because for the majority of cases (about 80%) only one of the ex-partners participated. Because the restructuring of the data implied that a parent and stepparent from the same stepfamily household have the same former household number, clustering at the former household level is essentially the same as clustering at the current stepfamily level for these 80% of cases. We thus only accounted for clustering at the former household level, and for cases where both ex-partners took part in the survey, the independent variables on the characteristics of stepfamily households (e.g., child residence) captured variation at the current stepfamily level. Note that our results stayed the same regardless of whether we accounted for the clustering only at the current or former household level. They also did not change when we ran multilevel analyses with a two-level data structure instead of clustering.

We estimated six models in total. Model 1 includes the main effects of biological relatedness (i.e., the dichotomous variable "stepparent"), children's residence, parents' gender and the control variables. Model 2 compares stepparents in different types of relationships. In the subsequent models, we tested whether the stepgap varied depending on the gender of (step)parents and children's residence by including interaction terms. In all interaction models, the dichotomous measure of biological relatedness was used to safeguard sufficient power. In Model 3A, we tested gender differences in the stepgap while excluding children's residence. Model 3B also includes residence to see how gender differences in the stepgap varied once children's residence was accounted for. Model 4A only includes the interaction between the stepgap and children's residence. Model 4B includes both interaction terms. For all the interaction models, we conducted Wald tests to see if the models improved.

RESULTS

With our first hypothesis, we expected biological parents to more involved than stepparents, with the involvement of married stepparents being the highest, followed by cohabiting stepparents and LAT stepparents, respectively. Model 1 in Table 2 shows that compared to biological

TABLE 1 Mean, range, and SD of the variables in the analyses

Variables	*M*	SD	Range
Parental involvement	3.74	1.40	1–7
Type of stepparent (Ref = biological parent)			
Married stepparent	0.11	a	0–1
Cohabiting stepparent	0.19	a	0–1
LAT stepparent	0.18	a	0–1
Residence of child (Ref = nonresident)			
Full-time resident	0.41	a	0–1
Part-time resident	0.32	a	0–1
Women (Ref = men)	0.49	a	0–1
Control variables	***M***	**SD**	**Range**
Age of child	12.34	3.08	3–17
Girl (Ref = boy)	0.48	a	0–1
Age of (step)parent	4.38	0.69	2.1–8.8
Education of (step)parent	6.84	1.87	1–10
Working hours of (step)parents	3.12	1.35	0–8
Married (Ref = cohabiting)	0.73	a	0–1
Number of biological sibling(s)	1.87	0.75	1–6
Half-sibling(s) (Ref = no)	0.17	a	0–1
Step-sibling(s) (Ref = no)			
Resident stepsibling	0.29	a	0–1
Nonresident stepsibling	0.30	a	0–1
Refreshment sample (Ref = no)	0.26	a	0–1
N (respondents)	3218		
N (former households)	1459		

Note: "a" indicates SD not presented for discrete variables. Higher values of parental involvement indicate more involvement with children. The variables of age and working hours of (step)parents are rescaled (by dividing them by 10).
Abbreviations: *M*, mean; Ref, reference; SD, standard deviation.
Source: New Families in the Netherlands, Wave 1, 2.

parents, stepparents spent less time on parent–child activities. This means that there was indeed a stepgap in the extent to which biological and stepparents were involved with their children. This stepgap was equivalent to a medium effect size of 0.74 (=1.04/SD (Y), with SD (Y) = 1.40). Looking at Model 2, we see that the magnitude of this stepgap varied according to the type of relationship, as expected. The smallest stepgap was observed in married stepfamilies, followed by cohabiting stepfamilies and LAT stepfamilies, respectively. All contrasts were statistically significant. The stepgap had a modest effect size of 0.42 (=0.59/SD (Y), with SD (Y) = 1.40) in married stepfamilies, whereas it had a medium effect size of 0.54 in cohabiting stepfamilies and a large effect size of 1.16 in LAT stepfamilies.

Both models, furthermore, show that the estimates for children's residence were in line with our second hypothesis arguing that (step)parents with full-time resident children had the highest parental involvement, followed by those with part-time resident children and nonresident children, respectively. Compared to stepfamilies with nonresident children, having full-time resident children was associated with the highest involvement of biological and stepparents, followed by having part-time resident children. Compared to having nonresident children,

TABLE 2 Regression analyses for the main effects of variables predicting parental involvement: Unstandardized coefficients and SEs

	Model 1		Model 2	
Variables	***B***	**SE**	***B***	**SE**
Stepparent (Ref = biological parent)	−1.04***	0.03		
Type of stepparent (Ref = biological parent)				
Married stepparent			−0.59***	0.05
Cohabiting stepparent			−0.75***[b]	0.03
LAT stepparent			−1.62***[c,d]	0.05
Residence of child (Ref = nonresident)				
Full-time resident	1.37***	0.06	1.46***	0.06
Part-time resident	1.06***[a]	0.06	1.14***[a]	0.06
Woman (Ref = man)	0.16***	0.04	0.15***	0.03
	Model 1		**Model 2**	
Control variables	***B***	**SE**	***B***	**SE**
Age of child	−0.12***	0.01	−0.12***	0.01
Girl (Ref = boy)	0.04	0.04	0.04	0.04
Age of (step)parent	−0.08*	0.04	−0.03	0.04
Education of (step)parent	0.03**	0.01	0.03**	0.01
Working hours of (step)parent	−0.03*	0.02	−0.03*	0.01
Married (Ref = cohabiting)	0.09	0.05	0.05	0.05
Number of biological sibling(s) (Ref = no)	−0.05	0.03	−0.05	0.03
Half-sibling(s) (Ref = no)	0.16*	0.07	0.02	0.07
Step-sibling(s) (Ref = no)				
Resident stepsibling	−0.28***	0.06	−0.19**	0.06
Nonresident stepsibling	−0.22***	0.06	−0.25***	0.06
Refreshment sample (Ref = no)	0.06	0.05	0.06	0.05
Adjusted R^2	0.43		0.48	
N (respondents)	3218			
N (former households)	1459			

Abbreviations: Ref, reference; SE, standard error.
[a]Part-time residence differs significantly from full-time residence (two-sided $p < .001$).
[b]Married stepparents differ significantly from cohabiting stepparents (two-sided $p < .01$).
[c]Married stepparents differ significantly from LAT stepparents (two-sided $p < .001$).
[d]Cohabiting stepparents differ significantly from LAT stepparents (two-sided $p < .001$).
*Two-sided $p < .05$. **Two-sided $p < .01$. ***Two-sided $p < .001$.
Source: New Families in the Netherlands, Wave 1, 2.

having full-time resident children had a large effect size (e.g., 0.98 in Model 1), whereas it was a medium effect size for part-time resident children (e.g., 0.76 in Model 1). Although all contrasts were statistically significant, note that the difference in parental involvement between having full-time versus part-time resident children (e.g., $b = 0.31$ in Model 1—not shown in Table 2) was smaller than the difference between having nonresident versus having (part-time/ full-time) resident children ($b = 1.37$ and $b = 1.06$ in Model 1). Also note that the difference in the main effects of children's residence and of biological relatedness was small (see Model 1: $b = -1.04$ versus $b = 1.37$/ $b = 1.06$—all variables being dichotomous), implying that both were about

equally important determinants of parental involvement. In addition, (step)mothers were found to be more involved than (step)fathers. Note that this effect of gender pertains to both stepparents and biological parents, whereas the effect of gender may well differ depending on the type of parent.

Regarding the control variables, our analyses show that the older the children were, the less (step)parents were involved. (Step)parents' age was negatively associated with their involvement (be it only in Model 1). Higher education levels of (step)parents were related to more involvement, whereas longer working hours had the opposite effect. Lastly, the presence of half-siblings was associated with more parental involvement (be it only in Model 1), whereas the effect of having (resident/nonresident) stepsiblings was the opposite.

Table 3 shows the results of the analyses including interaction terms of parents' gender and children's residence with biological relatedness. We hypothesized the stepgap to be larger for mothers than fathers. Model 3A tests this interaction without including children's residence. Wald tests indicated that adding this interaction improved the model ($\chi^2[1] = 163.58$, $p < .001$; not shown in Table 3). The regression coefficients show that the stepgap was observed for both mothers and fathers but that it was larger for mothers than for fathers (see interaction term: $b = -1.47$, $p < .001$). Model 3B includes also children's residence. For this model, Wald tests indicated that the interaction between biological relatedness and (step)parents' gender did not improve the model ($\chi^2[1] = 0.04$, $p = .847$; not shown in Table 3). Accordingly, Model 3B reveals that, contrary to our expectations, once children's residence was accounted for, the stepgap did not significantly differ between mothers and fathers ($b = 0.02$, $p = .847$). Hence, the larger stepgap observed for mothers in Model 3A stemmed from stepmothers often having nonresident stepchildren.

With our final hypothesis, we expected the stepgap to be the smallest in stepfamilies with full-time resident children, followed by those with part-time resident and nonresident children, respectively. Models 4A and 4B show how the stepgap differed depending on children's residence, but differ in whether the interaction between gender and biological relatedness is also

TABLE 3 Regression analyses for the interaction effects of variables predicting parental involvement: Unstandardized coefficients and SEs

Variables	Model 3A *B* (SE)	Model 3B *B* (SE)	Model 4A *B* (SE)	Model 4B *B* (SE)
Stepparent (Ref = biological parent)	−0.30*** (0.07)	−1.05*** (0.07)	−0.55*** (0.06)	−0.56*** (0.09)
Residence of child (Ref = nonresident)				
Full-time resident		1.38*** (0.08)	1.71*** (0.07)	1.72*** (0.08)
Part-time resident		1.07***,[a] (0.07)	1.42***,[a] (0.07)	1.42***,[a] (0.07)
Woman (Ref = man)	0.88*** (0.07)	0.14* (0.07)	−0.01 (0.04)	−0.02 (0.06)
Stepparent × Woman	−1.47*** (0.12)	0.02 (0.12)	–	0.02 (0.12)
Stepparent × Full-time resident			−0.68*** (0.09)	−0.68*** (0.09)
Stepparent × Part-time resident			−0.71*** (0.08)	−0.71*** (0.08)
Adjusted R^2	0.34	0.43	0.44	0.44
N (respondents)	3218			
N (former households)	1459			

Note: Control variables are added into the analyses but not shown in the table.
Abbreviations: Ref, reference; SE, standard error.
[a]Part-time resident differs significantly from full-time resident (two-sided $p < .001$).
*Two-sided $p < .05$. ***Two-sided $p < .001$.
Source: New Families in the Netherlands, Wave 1, 2.

included. Because both models have almost identical results and Model 4B is the more complete one, we only discuss the results from this model. Wald tests showed that the model was improved after adding the interaction terms between biological relatedness and children's residence in Model 4B ($\chi^2[2] = 42.64$, $p < .001$; not shown in Table 3). The regression coefficients show that there was a stepgap in our reference group—stepfamilies with nonresident children ($b = -0.56$, $p < .001$). Contrary to our expectations, the stepgap in stepfamilies with (full-time/part-time) resident children was larger than the stepgap in our reference group (Full-time resident: $b = -0.68$, $p < .001$; Part-time resident: $b = -0.71$, $p < .001$). Changing the reference category to stepfamilies with part-time resident children showed that the stepgap did not significantly differ between stepfamilies with full-time resident children and those with part-time resident children ($b = -0.02$, $p = .724$; not shown in Table 3). For an easier interpretation of our findings, we plotted the interaction in Figure 1. As this figure shows, biological parents were more involved than stepparents in all residence arrangements, but these differences were smaller in case of nonresident children. The larger stepgap in stepfamilies with resident children seems to be due to the higher involvement of biological parents in these stepfamilies compared to involvement of biological parents with nonresident children. Although having (full-time/part-time) resident children also increased stepparents' involvement, this increase was not as big as the increase for biological parents.

Additional analyses

Our finding that there was no gendered stepgap is contrary to previous research reporting a larger stepgap for mothers than fathers (Ivanova, 2017; Kalmijn et al., 2019). The most comparable study in this respect is the study by Ivanova (2017) as it also focused on minor children and parental involvement in parent–child activities. Yet, her study used less recent cross-national data including Eastern European countries, which perhaps led to more pronounced gender differences. In addition, she only included resident parents, compared stepparents with non-divorced instead of divorced biological parents and used relative (i.e., doing more/less than partner) instead of absolute measures of parental involvement. It is difficult to judge whether these differences in research design are the source of our contradictory findings, but for some other differences we can examine their role.

First, Ivanova (2017)'s sample included younger children than our sample. Because younger children might need more care from their biological mother—resulting in a larger stepgap for mothers—we explored variations by the child's age. We created three dummy variables for

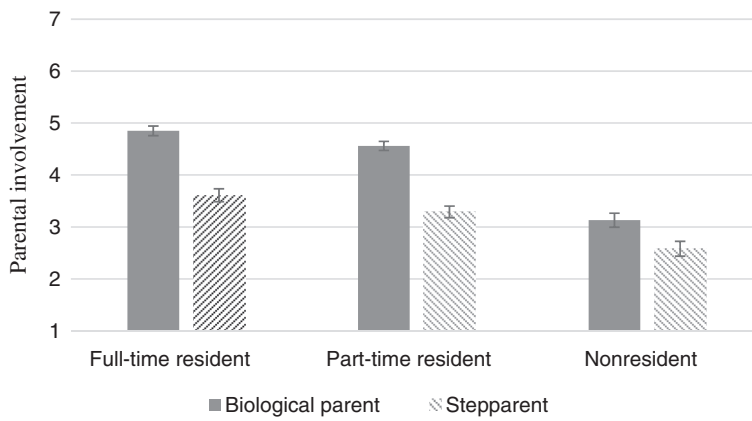

FIGURE 1 Effects of children's residence on parental involvement by biological relatedness of parents

different age groups: *youngest* (focal child <12 years old), *medium-aged* (12–13), *oldest* (>13) and included a three-way interaction term between these age categories, parent's gender, and biological relatedness (see Table S2). Wald tests showed that this interaction improved the model (($\chi^2[2] = 3.79$, $p = .023$), not shown in Table S2). We plotted the interaction in Figure S1 and observed a larger stepgap for mothers for the youngest group, though the gender difference in the stepgap was only significant at the 10% level ($b = -0.32$, $p = .073$). For older age groups, gender differences were negligible (>13 years old) or even reversed (12–13 years old), yet gender differences in the stepgap were not statistically significant for older age groups (for 12–13 years old: $b = 0.33$, $p = .118$; for >13 years old: $b = 0.10$, $p = .531$, not shown in Table S2). Part of the reason why we do not find a gendered stepgap may thus be children's older age in our sample, as the average age in Ivanova (2017)'s study coincides with the youngest category.

Second, Ivanova (2017) found more pronounced gender differences for "physical tasks" (e.g., putting child to bed) than for "interactive tasks" (e.g., helping with homework). This suggests that differences between biological mothers and stepmothers were larger for (traditionally) mother-oriented tasks. Due to our focus on older children, we did not include physical tasks, which may explain our contradictory findings. To gain more insight in the role of the type of task, we examined gender differences in the stepgap for each parental task separately (see Table S3). The stepgap was indeed larger for mothers in case of mother-oriented tasks such as talking about issues in children's lives (Hawkins et al., 2006) and dropping off/picking up children (Schwanen, 2007). It was larger for fathers, albeit marginally significant, for playing games—a more father-oriented task (Yeung et al., 2001). Surprisingly, the stepgap was also larger for fathers for doing household tasks with children, which is a mother-oriented task (Yeung et al., 2001). Overall, the results suggest that our focus on tasks related to older children and hence, less mother-oriented tasks, may explain why we did not find a gendered stepgap.

Lastly, our sample was selective, among others, on education due to panel attrition. We therefore checked whether the gendered stepgap was more pronounced for lower educated groups. We created three dummy variables for (step)parents' educational level: *low* (incomplete, elementary, lower vocational), *medium* (secondary, intermediate vocational), and *high* (higher vocational, university, postgraduate), and ran a three-way interaction (not presented). This interaction did not improve the model ($\chi^2[2] = 2.10$, $p = .123$), suggesting that our relatively highly educated sample is likely not an important reason why our results differ from Ivanova (2017)'s study. Note, however, that the low number of lower-educated (step)parents in our sample might have decreased the likelihood of finding significant gender differences in the stepgap across education levels.

DISCUSSION

Despite the importance of parental involvement for children's outcomes, little is known about this involvement in stepfamilies beyond the most common family type—that is, married stepfather families with full-time resident children (Raley & Sweeney, 2020). Our research included also some of the more recent and emerging stepfamily types, offering a more complete picture of parental involvement in contemporary stepfamilies. We furthermore addressed the distinct roles of biological relatedness, residence, gender, and type of relationship more conclusively than most previous research has been able to do so.

Our first conclusion is that residence is as important as biological relatedness for parental involvement. The literature has often discussed the importance of residence vis-à-vis biology for parent–child ties (see Kalmijn et al., 2019), but most studies focused on the role of biology and only a few have been able to assess their relative importance. By examining the role of residence and biological relatedness simultaneously, our research could compare their relevance for parental involvement. Supporting prior research (e.g., Hofferth & Anderson, 2003), we found

biological parents to be more involved than stepparents (i.e., the stepgap). Living together with the children is also, about equally, important. (Step)parents with resident children were more involved than those with nonresident children, with involvement being higher when children were full-time, rather than part-time, resident in the household. Our findings on the type of relationship between biological and stepparents corroborate the importance of residence as the stepgap was particularly large for (step)parents in a LAT relationship than married and cohabiting stepfamilies—though the smaller commitment in LAT relationships may also explain this larger gap. Note that our sample referred to recently formed stepfamilies (within, on average, 5 years after divorce or separation). The stepparents in our sample, therefore, had a rather short residential history with their stepchildren. Previous research has shown the duration of residence to be important for parent–child relationships (Kalmijn, 2013). We thus might have underestimated the role of residence and overestimated the role of biology as the stepgap could also be due to biological parents' longer residential history with their children.

Our second conclusion is that the stepgap is more pronounced when children are resident in the stepfamily household. There is little prior research to compare our findings with and the few existing findings are inconsistent. Still, the findings of the study by Arránz Becker et al. (2013) are in line with our findings. A possible explanation for the larger stepgap in case of resident children may be the high constraints that nonresidence brings to parental engagement, such as limited visitation schedules. In stepfamilies with nonresident children, both biological and stepparents are restricted in their parental involvement by these constraints, resulting in a smaller stepgap. When these constraints are absent—that is, children are resident in the household, we see a larger stepgap emerge. An alternative explanation may lie in differences in the division of childcare between partners in stepfamilies. A clear division of child-related tasks with biological parents taking a higher share may be less evident in stepfamilies with nonresident children where parenting is not only limited in time but also often leisure-based (e.g., playing together; Stewart, 1999). It might be more common for biological and stepparents to engage in this type of parenting together during children's rather short visits. Whatever the reason, our findings suggest that conclusions about the magnitude of the stepgap derived from previous research foremostly on resident stepfamilies cannot be readily generalized to all stepfamilies and need to be nuanced.

Our last conclusion is that there is no clear evidence for a larger stepgap for mothers than fathers. This is contrary to previous research focusing on minor children (e.g., Ivanova, 2017) and adult children (e.g., Kalmijn et al., 2019). This contradiction could be due to our different sample of children, as our additional analyses showed. Compared to previous research on minor children (Ivanova, 2017), our sample consisted of older children. We therefore did not include traditionally mother-oriented tasks, such as physical care. The lack of gendered stepgap could also be due to recent changes in gender roles in society. Our data came from more contemporary cohorts of divorced parents and stepfamilies compared to prior research. The division of childcare between parents has become more egalitarian in recent decades, with fathers spending more time on parenting than before (Bianchi, 2011). In the case of the Netherlands, recent legislation is furthermore aimed at stimulating an equal role of both parents in the upbringing of the children after a divorce (Poortman & Van Gaalen, 2017). These changes may have weakened norms about the prominent role of biological mothers in childrearing and thus reduce the rather ambiguous position of stepmothers in childrearing.

Despite the advancements that our research brings to the literature, our study also had some limitations. First, as our analyses relied on cross-sectional data, we cannot rule out the possibility of reversed causality. For instance, less involved stepparents might be more likely to opt for a LAT relationship. Future research could use panel data to address this, though we realize that such data is difficult to obtain. Second, our data came from a rather selective sample (e.g., on socioeconomic status). We do not know how this selectivity exactly plays out and affects our substantive conclusions. Additionally, our sample includes relatively older children (average around 12 years

old) and is based in the Netherlands—where the law stimulates shared physical custody (Poortman & Van Gaalen, 2017), and cohabitation is more often regarded as an alternative to marriage compared to for example the United States (Sassler & Lichter, 2020). These factors may limit the generalizability of our findings as well as the comparability of them with prior research, which is often US-based, and, in some cases, includes younger children in stepfamilies with lower socioeconomic status (e.g., Berger et al., 2008). Still, many of our findings were in line with this prior research. Third, though we controlled for many demographic characteristics of (step)parents, there could still be additional factors (e.g., (step)parents' personality traits or values), influencing their selection into a specific type of relationship and/or residence arrangement, as well as parenting. As we do not have information on all these factors, we cannot completely rule out the possibility that selectivity (partly) accounts for the observed findings. Though not possible with our sample, future research could use for example within-child fixed effect models to address this problem. Fourth, we included only behavioral measures of parent–child relationships. Future research could examine if our conclusions also hold for qualitative aspects such as emotional closeness between parents and children. This could be particularly relevant for gender differences in the stepgap as children often have closer relationships with biological mothers, potentially leading to a larger stepgap for mothers than fathers. Lastly, our data relied on the reports of one partner as biological parents also reported about stepparents. Research on intact families has shown that partners often underestimate each other's share in parenting (Deutsch et al., 1993), suggesting that we may have overestimated the stepgap. To overcome this, data collected from both partners or data collected from a child perspective would be a welcome addition to the field.

All in all, biological relatedness, type of relationship, and where children reside are important determinants of parental involvement, whereas more nuance is required for the role of parents' gender. Our findings on the stepgap indicate that parents are more inclined to invest in their children from their bloodline (Daly & Wilson, 1980) and that there is still a certain level of ambiguity regarding stepparents' roles in contemporary stepfamilies (Cherlin, 1978). This is important as the stepgap during childhood could have implications for varying dimensions of solidarity children have with their (step)parents later on in their adult lives, such as having closer relationships with their biological parents than stepparents (Bengtson, 2001; Ivanova & Kalmijn, 2020). We, however, also found residence to be as important as biological relatedness in defining parental roles in these stepfamilies. This means that the opportunities that coresidence brings (Kalmijn, 2013), as well as social norms on caring for children resident in one's household (Ganong et al., 1995) also define parental roles, at least as much as biological relatedness does. Our study, lastly, suggests that the ambiguity regarding stepparents' parenting roles is not necessarily more pronounced for stepmothers. Rather, the ambiguity of stepmothers' roles likely depends on norms about the role of biological mothers, which may not only depend on the type of parenting task or children's age but may also vary across countries and cohorts.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The NFN data were collected by Utrecht University in collaboration with Statistics Netherlands (CBS) and were funded by grant 480-10-015 from the Medium Investments Fund of the Dutch Research Council (NWO) and by Utrecht University. This work was supported by NWO (grant number VI.C.181.024). This research was approved by the Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences, Utrecht University (FETC20-089).

ORCID

Ece Arat https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2013-6699

REFERENCES

Arránz Becker, O. A., Salzburger, V., Lois, N., & Nauck, B. (2013). What narrows the stepgap? Closeness between parents and adult (step)children in Germany. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, *75*(5), 1130–1148. https://doi.org/10.1111/jomf.12052

Bastaits, K., & Pasteels, I. (2019). Is joint physical custody in the best interests of the child? Parent–child relationships and custodial arrangements. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, *36*(11–12), 3752–3772. https://doi.org/10.1177/0265407519838071

Bengtson, V. L. (2001). Beyond the nuclear family: The increasing importance of multigenerational bonds. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, *63*(1), 1–16. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-3737.2001.00001.x

Berger, L. M., Carlson, M. J., Bzostek, S. H., & Osborne, C. (2008). Parenting practices of resident fathers: The role of marital and biological ties. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, *70*(3), 625–639. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-3737.2008.00510.x

Bianchi, S. M. (2011). Family change and time allocation in American families. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, *638*(1), 21–44. https://doi.org/10.1177/0002716211413731

Brines, J., & Joyner, K. (1999). The ties that bind: Principles of cohesion in cohabitation and marriage. *American Sociological Review*, *64*(3), 333–355. https://doi.org/10.2307/2657490

Bruce, C., & Fox, G. L. (1999). Accounting for patterns of father involvement: Age of child, father-child coresidence, and father role salience. *Sociological Inquiry*, *69*(3), 458–476. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-682X.1999.tb00881.x

Buchanan, C. M., Maccoby, E. E., & Dornbusch, S. M. (1996). *Adolescents after divorce* (pp. 108–142). Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Carlson, M. J. (2006). Family structure, father involvement, and adolescent behavioral outcomes. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, *68*(1), 137–154. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-3737.2006.00239.x

Carlson, M. J., & Berger, L. M. (2013). What kids get from parents: Packages of parental involvement across complex family forms. *Social Service Review*, *87*(2), 213–249. https://doi.org/10.1086/671015

Cherlin, A. (1978). Remarriage as an incomplete institution. *American Journal of Sociology*, *84*(3), 634–650. https://doi.org/10.1086/226830

Coleman, M., Ganong, L., & Fine, M. (2000). Reinvestigating remarriage: Another decade of progress. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, *62*(4), 1288–1307. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-3737.2000.01288.x

Daly, M., & Wilson, M. (1980). Discriminative parental solicitude: A biological perspective. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, *42*(2), 277–288. https://doi.org/10.2307/351225

DeLongis, A., & Preece, M. (2002). Emotional and relational consequences of coping in stepfamilies. *Marriage & Family Review*, *34*(1–2), 115–138. https://doi.org/10.1300/J002v34n01_06

Deutsch, F. M., Lozy, J. L., & Saxon, S. (1993). Taking credit: Couples' reports of contributions to child care. *Journal of Family Issues*, *14*(3), 421–437. https://doi.org/10.1177/019251393014003005

Di Leonardo, M. (1987). The female world of cards and holidays: Women, families, and the work of kinship. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, *12*(3), 440–453. https://doi.org/10.1086/494338

Fine, M. A. (1996). The clarity and content of the stepparent role: A review of the literature. *Journal of Divorce and Remarriage*, *24*(1–2), 19–34. https://doi.org/10.1300/J087v24n01_03

Flouri, E., & Buchanan, A. (2003). The role of father involvement and mother involvement in adolescents' psychological well-being. *British Journal of Social Work*, *33*(3), 399–406. https://doi.org/10.1093/bjsw/33.3.399

Ganong, L., & Coleman, M. (2017). *Stepfamily relationships* (2nd ed., pp. 143–173). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4899-7702-1

Ganong, L., & Coleman, M. (2018). Studying stepfamilies: Four eras of family scholarship. *Family Process*, *57*(1), 7–24. https://doi.org/10.1111/famp.12307

Ganong, L., Coleman, M., & Mistina, D. (1995). Normative beliefs about parents' and stepparents' financial obligations to children following divorce and remarriage. *Family Relations*, *44*(3), 306–315. https://doi.org/10.2307/585530

Gibson-Davis, C. M. (2008). Family structure effects on maternal and paternal parenting in low-income families. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, *70*(2), 452–465. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-3737.2008.00493.x

Guzzo, K. B. (2017). Shifts in higher-order unions and stepfamilies among currently cohabiting and married women of childbearing age. *Journal of Family Issues*, *38*(12), 1775–1799. https://doi.org/10.1177/0192513X16664180

Hawkins, D. N., Amato, P. R., & King, V. (2006). Parent–adolescent involvement: The relative influence of parent gender and residence. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, *68*(1), 125–136. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-3737.2006.00238.x

Hofferth, S. L., & Anderson, K. G. (2003). Are all dads equal? Biology versus marriage as a basis for paternal investment. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, *65*(1), 213–232. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-3737.2003.00213.x

Ivanova, K. (2017). Division of childcare in two-biological-parent and step-parent households: Importance of parental gender and type of partnership. *European Sociological Review*, *33*(5), 661–674. https://doi.org/10.1093/esr/jcx065

Ivanova, K., & Kalmijn, M. (2020). Parental involvement in youth and closeness to parents during adulthood: Stepparents and biological parents. *Journal of Family Psychology*, *34*(7), 794–803. https://doi.org/10.1037/fam0000659

Jensen, T. M. (2019). A typology of interactional patterns between youth and their stepfathers: Associations with family relationship quality and youth well-being. *Family Process*, *58*(2), 384–403. https://doi.org/10.1111/famp.12348

Jensen, T. M. (2021). Patterns of interactions between youth and resident stepmothers: A latent class analysis. *Family Process*, *60*(2), 538–555. https://doi.org/10.1111/famp.12556

Kalmijn, M. (2007). Gender differences in the effects of divorce, widowhood and remarriage on intergenerational support: Does marriage protect fathers? *Social Forces*, *85*(3), 1079–1104. https://doi.org/10.1353/sof.2007.0043

Kalmijn, M. (2013). Adult children's relationships with married parents, divorced parents, and stepparents: Biology, marriage, or residence? *Journal of Marriage and Family*, *75*(5), 1181–1193. https://doi.org/10.1111/jomf.12057

Kalmijn, M., De Leeuw, S. G., Hornstra, M., Ivanova, K., Van Gaalen, R., & Van Houdt, K. (2019). Family complexity into adulthood: The central role of mothers in shaping intergenerational ties. *American Sociological Review*, *84*(5), 876–904. https://doi.org/10.1177/0003122419871959

King, V. (2006). The antecedents and consequences of adolescents' relationships with stepfathers and nonresident fathers. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, *68*(4), 910–928. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-3737.2006.00304.x

King, V. (2007). When children have two mothers: Relationships with nonresident mothers, stepmothers, and fathers. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, *69*(5), 1178–1193. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-3737.2007.00440.x

Liefbroer, A. C., Poortman, A., & Seltzer, J. A. (2015). Why do intimate partners live apart? Evidence on LAT relationships across Europe. *Demographic Research*, *32*(8), 251–286. https://doi.org/10.4054/DemRes.2015.32.8

Meyer, D. R., Cancian, M., & Cook, S. T. (2017). The growth in shared custody in the United States: Patterns and implications. *Family Court Review*, *55*(4), 500–512. https://doi.org/10.1111/fcre.12300

Peterson, G. W., Bodman, D. A., Bush, K. R., & Madden-Derdich, D. (2000). Gender and parent–child relationships. In D. H. Demo, K. R. Allen, & M. A. Fine (Eds.), *Handbook of family diversity* (pp. 82–104). New York: Oxford University Press.

Poortman, A., Stienstra, K., & De Bruijn, S. (2018). *Codebook of the survey New Families in the Netherlands (NFN). Second wave*. Utrecht: Utrecht University.

Poortman, A., Van der Lippe, T., & Boele-Woelki, K. (2014). *Codebook of the survey New Families in the Netherlands (NFN). First wave*. Utrecht: Utrecht University.

Poortman, A., & Van Gaalen, R. (2017). Shared residence after separation: A review and new findings from the Netherlands. *Family Court Review*, *55*(4), 531–544. https://doi.org/10.1111/fcre.12302

Poortman, A., & Van Gaalen, R. (2019a). *New Families in the Netherlands (NFN): Wave 1*. DANS. https://doi.org/10.17026/dans-xj8-83k7

Poortman, A., & Van Gaalen, R. (2019b). *New Families in the Netherlands (NFN): Wave 2*. DANS. https://doi.org/10.17026/dans-24y-n8s4

Raley, R. K., & Sweeney, M. M. (2020). Divorce, repartnering, and stepfamilies: A decade in review. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, *82*(1), 81–99. https://doi.org/10.1111/jomf.12651

Sassler, S., & Lichter, D. T. (2020). Cohabitation and marriage: Complexity and diversity in union-formation patterns. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, *82*(1), 35–61. https://doi.org/10.1111/jomf.12617

Schnettler, S., & Steinbach, A. (2011). How do biological and social kinship play out within families in the U.S.? An evolutionary perspective on perceived parental care and closeness in adolescents. *Journal of Family Research*, *23*(2), 173–195. https://doi.org/10.20377/jfr-206

Schwanen, T. (2007). Gender differences in chauffeuring children among dual-earner families. *Professional Geographer*, *59*(4), 447–462. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9272.2007.00634.x

Smock, P. J., & Schwartz, C. R. (2020). The demography of families: A review of patterns and change. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, *82*(1), 9–34. https://doi.org/10.1111/jomf.12612

Stewart, S. D. (1999). Disneyland dads, Disneyland moms? How nonresident parents spend time with absent children. *Journal of Family Issues*, *20*(4), 539–556. https://doi.org/10.1177/019251399020004006

Svare, G. M., Jay, S., & Mason, M. A. (2004). Stepparents on stepparenting: An exploratory study of stepparenting approaches. *Journal of Divorce & Remarriage*, *41*(3–4), 81–97. https://doi.org/10.1300/J087v41n03_04

Sweeney, M. M. (2010). Remarriage and stepfamilies: Strategic sites for family scholarship in the 21st century. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, *72*(3), 667–684. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-3737.2010.00724.x

Thomson, E., Hanson, T. L., & McLanahan, S. S. (1994). Family structure and child well being: Economic resources vs. parental behaviors. *Social Forces*, *73*(1), 221–242. https://doi.org/10.1093/sf/73.1.221

Van Houdt, K., Kalmijn, M., & Ivanova, K. (2018). Family complexity and adult children's obligations: The role of divorce and co-residential history in norms to support parents and step-parents. *European Sociological Review*, *34*(2), 169–183. https://doi.org/10.1093/esr/jcy007

Van Houdt, K., Kalmijn, M., & Ivanova, K. (2019). Stepparental support to adult children: The diverging roles of stepmothers and stepfathers. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, *82*(2), 639–656. https://doi.org/10.1111/jomf.12599

Weaver, S. E., & Coleman, M. (2010). Caught in the middle: Mothers in stepfamilies. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, *27*(3), 305–326. https://doi.org/10.1177/0265407510361729

Wilder, S. (2014). Effects of parental involvement on academic achievement: A meta synthesis. *Educational Review*, *66*(3), 377–397. https://doi.org/10.1080/00131911.2013.780009

Yeung, W. J., Sandberg, J. F., Davis-Kean, P. E., & Hofferth, S. L. (2001). Children's time with fathers in intact families. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, *63*(1), 136–154. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-3737.2001.00136.x

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Additional supporting information may be found in the online version of the article at the publisher's website.

How to cite this article: Arat, E., Poortman, A.-R., & van der Lippe, T. (2022). Parental involvement in stepfamilies: Biology, relationship type, residence, and gender. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, *84*(3), 773–790. https://doi.org/10.1111/jomf.12817