

New book examines the forfeit fathers pay for balancing family and full-time work

June 14 2022, by Andrew Merrington



palgrave▶pivot

**Caregiving Fathers in
the Workplace**
Organisational
Experiences and the
Fatherhood Forfeit

Jasmine Kelland

palgrave
macmillan

Credit: Palgrave Macmillan

The "forfeits" facing fathers who want to balance their careers with a more equitable share of family care is the focus of a new book by a renowned expert in human resources.

"Caregiving Fathers in the Workplace—Organisational Experiences and the Fatherhood Forfeit" draws upon years of research by Dr. Jasmine Kelland, exploring the experiences and perceptions of [caregiving](#) fathers in the U.K.

From being considered as "secondary parents" to being discriminated against when they try to obtain roles designed to accommodate care-giving, Dr. Kelland says that many fathers are being held back by traditional stereotypes instead of being assisted by contemporary attitudes and workplace legislation.

And with wider workforce challenges emerging as a result of Brexit and the pandemic, and the improved outcomes for many children in households with a care-giving father, Dr. Kelland says there's a clear societal imperative to address the issue.

"It is widely accepted that we've moved on from the archetypal 1950s model of 'think-child-think-mum,' and a father's place is at work," says Dr. Kelland, a Lecturer in Human Resource Management in the University of Plymouth's Business School.

"Fathers undoubtedly undertake a more active role in the 'hands on' parenting of their children than in previous generations while mothers

are making an increasing contribution to the labor market. But this is not being reflected in our working arrangements, which remain 'gendered' to a significant extent."

The book highlights the specific challenges faced by caregiving fathers when they attempt to take an active role in the parenting of their children—identified as the "fatherhood forfeit." Quantitative data illustrates how fathers are less likely than mothers to obtain a job role that is conducive to taking an active role in caregiving.

The book continues to investigate the "fatherhood forfeit" through exploration of qualitative data, and it is observed that caregiving fathers face "where is Mum?" comments and judgements of "unconventionality," obtaining less workplace support than mothers for caregiving activities and social mistreatment (such as negative judgment and mockery). Thus, caregiving fathers are identified as encountering a set of forfeits that are two-fold: fathers face a forfeit of being less likely to obtain a role conducive to taking an active part in caregiving and forfeit a positive workplace experience if they do obtain such a role.

Finally, the study explores some of the practical steps that organizations can take to minimize this "fatherhood forfeit" and reflects upon the pandemic's impact upon working practices and traditional support mechanisms such as nurseries and grandparents.

"The issue of 'fatherhood forfeits' need to be addressed if we are to improve the workplace experience for caregiving fathers," Dr. Kelland concludes. "In so doing, we are likely to see a number of other benefits, such as improving recruitment and retention policies, reducing parental work-life conflict, helping organizations to prepare for the impact of COVID-19 and Brexit, addressing the gender pay gap and ultimately, improving [family life](#) for both mothers and [children](#)."

Dr. Kelland's "fatherhood forfeit" research has been published by the House of Commons Women and Equalities Select Committee and referred to in a House of Commons debate exploring "Fathers in the Family." She has also presented her research to the U.K. Parliament All-Party Parliamentary Group on Fatherhood, professional and international academic conferences and numerous organizations.

Provided by University of Plymouth

Citation: New book examines the forfeit fathers pay for balancing family and full-time work (2022, June 14) retrieved 25 June 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2022-06-forfeit-fathers-family-full-time.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.