

A dangerous truth.

Dalrock | 27 August, 2019 | by Dalrock

The Institute for Family Studies has an essay by Professor W. Bradford Wilcox, titled [Marriage Facilitates Responsible Fatherhood](#). According to the editor's note the essay is an abbreviated version of Wilcox's testimony to the House Ways and Means *Committee for the Worker and Family Support* Subcommittee Hearing in June. The essay concludes with:

Given all this, federal programs and public policies designed to promote healthy fatherhood should not lose sight of the importance of also strengthening marriage in America. That's because no other institution is as successful as marriage in connecting fathers to their children.

Wilcox's closing plea may seem obvious, but the truth he is touching on is a politically dangerous one. This is because "responsible fatherhood" is a term used to minimize the entirely predictable consequences of reworking our family structure from a marriage based model to a child support model. The implication is that something mysterious suddenly happened to men, causing fathers to become less engaged with their children. Politicians promote this implication with organizations like the [National Responsible Fatherhood Clearinghouse](#), and they do so to distract from their own evil actions. The reality is that we have created elaborate legal machinery to eject fathers from the home and alienate them from their children.

Professor Willcox urges congress to look for ways to strengthen marriage, but it would be hugely beneficial if the government would simply stop working so diligently to facilitate kicking fathers out of the home, and out of their children's lives. But kicking dad out is essential to achieving feminist goals. The machinery of familial destruction is essential to empower women who are unmarried, divorced, and even *married*.

In the case of married women, giving mothers the ability to easily eject the father from the home gives wives great power over their husbands. Professor Martin Halla warns policy makers that joint custody harms married mothers by making it harder for mothers to alienate fathers from their children. From [Do joint custody laws improve family well-being?](#)

The redistribution effect of joint custody laws

The introduction of joint custody improves divorce as an option for men and potentially worsens it for women. The change to joint custody strengthens the bargaining position of men within marriage... This shift in allocation power should increase the well-being of men and potentially lower it for women.

...

Policymakers should acknowledge that regulating families' post-divorce life may affect intact families...

To predict the effects of a planned reform, it would be important to assess how the relative bargaining positions of spouses will be affected. This can be approximated by checking how the reform affects the well-being of each partner in the case of a potential divorce. The party who will benefit from the reform will gain power within the marriage.

Economists Stevenson and Wolfers describe the mechanism Halla is referring to in their paper [Bargaining in the Shadow of the Law: Divorce Laws and Family Distress](#) (emphasis mine).

In the literature on the economics of the family there has been growing consensus on the need to take bargaining and distribution within marriage seriously. **Such models of the family rely on a threat point to determine distribution within the household. The switch to a unilateral divorce regime redistributes power in a marriage, giving power to the person who wants out, and reducing the power previously held by the partner interested in preserving the marriage.**

Alienating children from their fathers isn't an unintended side effect of our current system. Giving mothers the power to kick fathers out of their children's lives is a public policy tool used to strike fear in married fathers. Again from Professor Halla:

...it is useful to consider that a father's situation improves on average after a divorce in a joint custody regime compared with the situation before the reform. On average, fathers lose a large share of their parental rights after divorce under sole custody rules, while they still have a good chance of being involved in their children's upbringing under joint custody rules.

If fathers don't fear losing access to their children, mothers can't use this fear to threaten them. As a [sociology professor](#), Wilcox has to understand the public policy reason fathers are being kicked out of their children's lives. Men didn't suddenly and mysteriously become less responsible; government kicked fathers out of the home to empower mothers. Yet Wilcox ignores this elephant in the middle of the room in his testimony to Congress. This was a shrewd move, because addressing *that* ugly truth would certainly threaten Wilcox's career in public policy. As it stands even stating the painfully obvious, that legally (even if only temporarily) declaring that fathers are part of the family increases fathers' investment in their families, is a potential threat to the status quo. For his tepid courage in the service of innocent children, Professor Wilcox deserves tepid praise. And should he or any of his peers one day develop the courage to speak the more dangerous truth, that alienation of fathers from their children is quite intentional, it would present a serious threat to our current family model.

HT Anon

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