All in a day's work: A qualitative analysis of fathers' uptake of flexible working arrangements, workplace culture, and masculine identity

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List of Publications

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Thesis Abstract

Australian men's use of flexible working arrangements, including parental leave, is low when compared with women in Australia and also when compared with men in other countries. This impedes their ability to be involved in parenting activities. This thesis will explore why Australian men's use of flexible working arrangements remains low.

Workplace flexibility has been an important way to balance work and life. Access to and organisational support for use of flexibility has been suggested to affect employee health and well-being, reduce employee turnover, and affect organisational commitment (Dorio, Bryant, & Allen, 2008; Pocock, 2005a; Williams, 2000). A wealth of literature suggests that organisational factors are influential in men's decision making in relation to the use or non-use of flexible working arrangements. This includes managerial support for use of flexibility, perceptions of entitlement to flexibility, and factors such as organisational culture, which sets out norms and organisational expectations for good organisational citizens (Wayne & Cordeiro, 2003). Included in these expectations is the ideal worker norm.

Further, gendered expectations regarding who should work and who should provide care within families persist (Deutsch, 2007). Particularly in Australia, masculine identity aa well as fathering identity is tied up in being a financial provider, and these gendered expectations, (re)produced socially and culturally, affect the roles men see as appropriate for them to inhabit (Baxter & Hewitt, 2013).

A social constructionist perspective was employed in this research. This framework suggests that meaning is created subjectively, and is (re)produced through

social practices, action and interaction with others (Crotty, 1998). Within this framework, the present research was guided by several theoretical perspectives related to gender and organisations: gendered organisational theory, the ideal worker norm, masculinity theory, and feminist theory. These theories complement each other and take a critical approach to the taken-for-granted, which is pertinent when attempting to investigate, challenge, and deconstruct gender and the structures which (re)produce and maintain it. Semi-structured interviews with fathers and with workplace managers were utilised to collect data. Both thematic analysis and discourse analysis were applied when interpreting and analysing the data.

Findings of this research point to the persistence of gendered norms and expectations in relation to parenting and work, and that these continue to have an impact upon men's decision making in the organisational context. The persistence of the ideal worker norm and male breadwinner expectations, for example, remain influential in men's decision making in regard to work and parenting roles, the parenting practices they choose to be involved in, and how they construct fathering.

However, the findings also suggest that challenges to and evolution of masculinity are occurring. Specifically, men are beginning to challenge aspects of masculinity which contribute to restrictions in their parenting choices. The implications of these challenges are explored. Finally, this research suggests the need to address structural restrictions and to put more supports in place to enable fathers to engage more fully in parenting. In particular, it is suggested that organisational and family policies need to provide more support for men to be involved in caregiving and unpaid labour.

Declaration

I certify that this work contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in my name, in any university or other tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text. In addition, I certify that no part of this work will, in the future, be used in a submission in my name, for any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution without the prior approval of the University of Adelaide and where applicable, any partner institution responsible for the joint-award of this degree.

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Ashlee Borgkvist

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Chapter 1: Introduction

To a large extent . . . our knowledge about mothers' employment, its determinants and consequences, has stalled. This is because men's relationship to work and family life has been much less investigated. A basic tenet of gender theory is that gender is relational; that is, social definitions of femininity and masculinity are so intertwined that one cannot change much without the other changing at the same time. We therefore cannot really understand or improve the position of women in the family and in the labor market unless men's relation to work and family life is also well-researched and understood. (Haas & O'Brien, 2010, p. 271)

1.1 Introduction and thesis overview

This thesis will examine men's uptake of flexible working arrangements, barriers and facilitators to this, and also gendered aspects of men's uptake. In this chapter I will give a brief overview of flexible working arrangements and men's uptake of them. I will introduce some important concepts related to this topic that this thesis will explore. It is also pertinent to acknowledge here that this thesis will focus on heterosexual couples, and thus, this research is based in a heteronormative model of straight couples and parents.

Flexible working arrangements are generally understood to be any working arrangements where the employee has some influence over where, when, how much, and how work is conducted (Hegewisch, 2009). These arrangements can include working from home or another location, telecommuting, working compressed hours, working part-time, and using parental leave and flexi-time, among other things. Access

to and support for use of flexibility has been suggested to affect employee health and well-being, reduce employee turnover, and affect organisational commitment (Dorio et al., 2008; Pocock, Charlesworth, & Chapman, 2013; Williams, 2010). Data on working time arrangements indicates that, in 2012, around one third of employees were believed to be using some form of flexible working arrangement, with more women engaged in part-time work (Huerta et al., 2013; see also ABS, 2019).

The rates of men taking up flexible working arrangements in Australia, including parental leave, are relatively low both when compared with women in Australia and when compared with men in other countries (Baxter, 2013b; Craig & Mullan, 2010; Craig & Mullan, 2012; Huerta et al., 2013). There are several complex reasons why the rates of Australian men's use of flexible working arrangements are relatively low. One strong influence is the male breadwinner model that has persisted in Australian society, and has been seen to impact upon the willingness of the Australian government to legislate afresh in this area (Baird, 2011; Baird & Murray, 2014; Brennan, 2011; van Egmond, Baxter, Buchler, & Western, 2010). For example, a national Parental Leave scheme was introduced only in 2011 with a scheme specifically targeting fathers introduced in 2013 (Dreyfus, 2013; Martin et al., 2014).

Australia, as part of the Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD), was the second to last country to introduce a Paid Parental Leave scheme, with only the United States of America yet to introduce one (Pocock et al., 2013). When the Parental Leave scheme was introduced in Australia, 18 weeks of leave following birth was offered to the primary caregiver of the child. This could be a man or a woman, but the primary caregiver continues to almost always be the mother, due in part to the need for the woman to recover after childbirth and if she chooses to

breastfeed, and due in part to the likelihood of male partners earning more (Baxter, 2013b). Mothers thus tend to take the whole 18 weeks of leave, and fathers in Australia rarely assume the position of primary caregiver. Due to their being in the home, women tend to assume responsibility for household (unpaid) labour, whilst men assume responsibility for paid work—a trend which continues after Paid Parental Leave as reflected in research and ABS data (ABS, 2019; Baxter & Hewitt, 2013; Baxter, 2013b; Baxter & Smart, 2011; Craig, Mullan, & Blaxland, 2010; Huerta et al., 2013). Arguably, the nature of this Parental Leave policy thus works to reproduce the idea of women as responsible for caregiving and further reinforced the apparent normality of the division of household labour.

The subsequent Dad and Partner Pay leave scheme introduced in 2013 is targeted at fathers but offers only two weeks of leave at minimum wage. In contrast, in the Nordic countries, the gender equality agenda implemented by governments has meant that family-friendly measures are targeted at both men and women (Brandth & Kvande, 2011; O'Brien, Brandth, & Kvande, 2007). Consequently, Sweden, Finland, Norway, and Denmark have some of the highest rates in the world of men utilising parental leave and flexible leave on a longer-term basis (Craig & Mullan, 2010; Huerta et al., 2013). As Haas and Hwang (1995) noted, 'government commitment to work-family issues has a significant impact on the extent to which employers involve themselves in support programs for working parents' (p. 29). That is, the social, cultural, and political climate outside organisations has an impact on what happens inside them and on the practices that are endorsed officially and unofficially.

Pocock (2005) has further suggested that there is a social and personal case for work-life balance being widely and readily available to both men and women—and

supported by workplaces both formally and informally. Given the low rates of men utilising workplace flexibility in Australia, and the dearth of information on how policies in Australia affect men's uptake of flexible working arrangements, research which assists in understanding how men experience the use of flexibility policies, the role of organisational culture in this experience, and how uptake can be improved is thus immensely important. Understanding men's experiences of flexible working arrangements, and barriers which could be addressed, will assist in development of policies and initiatives to increase men's uptake of flexibility.

This thesis presents a qualitative enquiry undertaken to investigate barriers and facilitators to men's use of flexible working arrangements. A major aspect of this research was investigating how men formed and negotiated masculinity and masculine identity in relation to paid work, and in relation to parenting, and how this identity work related to their use of workplace flexibility. In the present chapter I will briefly introduce the topic of flexible working arrangements and men's uptake of formal and use of informal policies, along with related concepts such as masculinity and the ideal worker norm. A review of previous research on this topic is presented in Chapter 2, along with arguments about why men's use of flexible working arrangements is an important issue requiring close examination.

In Chapters 3 and 4 I will explain the theoretical and methodological orientation of the research. Chapters 5 through 8 present the main findings and analysis of the research, and are manuscripts that either have been published in, submitted to, or are ready for submission to academic journals. Finally, the implications of the findings are discussed in Chapter 9.

1.2 Men and women in workplaces

      Acker (1990, 1992a, 2012) and Ely and Meyerson (2000a, 2000b, 2010) asserted that organisations cannot be considered as separate from the culture in which they exist. In particular, Acker (1990) theorised that organisational cultures can reinforce the division of labour and gender roles in relation to parenting and work, through the practices and processes they employ; that organisations both produce and reproduce ideas regarding gender and the associated expectations of men and women present within wider society and culture; and that the interactions of employees and the language used when interacting within organisations (re)produced gender ideology. Acker's (1990) conceptualisation of the ideal worker norm, and how it relates to men's uptake and use of flexibility policies, will be discussed in more detail in Chapters 2 and 3.

      Although men and women exist in both the private and public realms, inclusion in the labour market has typically been associated with masculinity and masculine identity, while the domestic sphere, where caring and family is emphasised, has typically been associated with feminine identity (Connell, 2005a, 2005b; Fine, 2010; van Egmond et al., 2010). These gendered divisions have had a major impact on discourses around fatherhood (and motherhood), as well as for the practices that are associated with and considered acceptable for fathers (and mothers)—both inside and outside the home. As Halford (2006) stated, '[t]hese discursive and practical distinctions between motherhood and fatherhood have been underpinned by the spatial separation of work from home, and of public from private, and the gendered practices associated with each sphere' (pp. 383-384). A historical reliance on, and expectation of, women to conduct care work and on men to perform the role of the unencumbered, or ideal, worker, can thus be seen not only to restrict women and men's abilities to deviate from gendered expectations (see Cech & Blair-Loy, 2014; Correll, Kelly, O'Connor, & Williams, 2014; Gorman & Mosseri,

2019). Men's use of flexible leave policies, particularly for family reasons, can thus be seen as subversive to the normal role they are expected to inhabit in an organisation.

1.3 Fathers and flexibility

Previous research has indicated that fathers can experience benefits such as lower stress and higher engagement with their children as a result of using flexible work policies (Huerta et al., 2013; Joyce, Pabayo, Critchley, & Bambra, 2010). Father's use of flexible leave policies also enables them to provide more support to women to return to, or enter more fully into, the workplace after the birth of a child (Baxter, 2013b; Haas & Hwang, 2016; Hegewisch, 2009; Hegewisch & Gornick, 2011; Huerta et al., 2013; Pocock, 2005a). However, fathers in Western[1] countries often work very long hours and utilise flexibility less than mothers. In Australia, fathers are likely to work long hours—an average of 46 hours per week when their children are under 5 years old, and an average of 40-46 hours per week when their children are under 12 years old (ABS, 2019; Huerta et al., 2013; WGEA, 2014). Women, in contrast, are much more likely to work part-time when their children are under 12, and as a result take on the bulk of caregiving responsibilities (Baxter, 2013a, 2013b; Cooke & Baxter, 2010; Craig & Mullan, 2010; Huerta et al., 2013).

When considering men's long work hours and the increase in companies' expectations that work tasks will be completed outside of standard work hours (Alexander & Baxter, 2005; Cortis & Powell, 2018; Roberts & Walker, 2018), it is feasible that some fathers may not have enough time to foster quality relationships with their children, or to take care of their own health and well-being. Participants in

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[1] In this thesis I use the term 'Western' following patterns in the literature. However, I understand it is a contested term (see, for example, Connell, 2011, 2014c).

McLaughlin and Muldoon's (2014) study, for example, reported 'emotional spillover' from work, which put stress on men's relationships with their partner and children. They also reported increased pressure to deal with competing demands of work (being a provider) and family (being an involved father). Fathers in their study also cited a perceived lack of workplace support and expectations of availability out of hours if work demands required it, including being expected to take work home and finding it difficult to get time off, which made work and family life hard to integrate. Dixon and colleagues (2014) also suggested that as a result of longer working hours and work often being conducted at home outside of work hours, men have less time to undertake health activities such as exercising and healthy eating.

Others have suggested that fathers' paid work hours may be maintained rather than increased, and that despite working long hours some may be highly involved with their children (Coles, Hewitt, & Martin, 2018; Gjerdingen & Center, 2005; Kaufman & Uhlenberg, 2000; McGill, 2014). Related to the increase in work hours, however, Coltrane (1996) and others make an important link between fathering identity, masculinity, and paid work. Coltrane and colleagues (2013) observed that cultural expectations that fathers will provide financially for their children remain pervasive, and position the primary role of the father within families as outside of the home as financial provider rather than involved caregiver (see also Denny, Brewton-Tiayon, Lykke, & Milkie, 2014; Marsiglio, Lohan, & Culley, 2013; Milkie & Denny, 2014; Shirani, Henwood, & Coltart, 2012; Stevens, 2015). As will be explored further in Chapter 2, there is a powerful link between masculinity, fathering identity, and paid work, which has a large influence on the subject positions fathers view as available to them and the decisions they make in relation to paid work and involved fathering.

1.4 Aims of the research and research questions

As mentioned, within Australia and other Western countries, men's uptake of flexible working arrangements remains relatively low in general and when compared with women (OECD, 2016). Research has the potential to point to ways in which men's uptake of flexible arrangements can be improved. This research project has the overall aim of investigating fathers' experiences of using and not-using flexible working arrangements, identifying barriers and facilitators to this use, as well as exploring how men negotiate their masculine identities in relation to paid work and parenting.

The aims of the project are to review the relevant literature and document what aspects of the issue are pertinent or require further attention. I will present this in Chapter 2. From this literature review, I identified that the construction of masculine identity, organisational and managerial support, and the construction of fathering identity were important factors in men's use of flexible working arrangements. Research questions resulting from this identification were:

1.   What are the barriers and facilitators, at the individual and organisational level, to men's use of flexible work arrangements?

2.   What role does the construction of masculine and fathering identities have in men's decisions to use or not use flexible working arrangements?

3.   How do men experience the use of flexible working arrangements?

4.   How do managers talk about workplace flexibility and is there a gendered component to these discussions?

In chapters 3 and 4, I describe the theoretical and methodological orientations employed to carry out a qualitative investigation of this topic. Chapter 3 will describe the epistemological and theoretical orientation of this research. This project employs a

social constructionist perspective, and is guided by gendered organisational theory, and the associated concept of the ideal worker norm, as well as masculinity theory, and feminist theory. Chapter 4 will outline the methodological approach taken. Data were collected via semi-structured interviews with both working fathers and senior managers within a variety of organisations, and analysed through both thematic and discursive techniques.

I present the findings relating to the research questions in Chapters 5-8. Chapter 5 presents analysis of interviews conducted with working fathers. Results suggest that masculine identity is an important factor in men's decision-making around work and the use of flexibility for family reasons, and that the ideal worker norm remains influential. It further considers the positions of men who do use flexibility and why they may have been able to make the decision to step away from full-time paid work.

Chapter 6 similarly presents findings from interviews with working fathers, but investigates the ways in which fathers account for their lack of involvement in parenting and family life, relative to women. It articulates that, despite intentions expressed before parenthood, parenting often plays out along traditional, gendered lines, and accounts given by working fathers regarding their levels of involvement. This chapter demonstrates how discourses used by fathers might work to maintain gendered divisions in relation to parenting and work.

Chapter 7 presents the findings of a collaboration between myself and Dr Sarah Hunter who was, at the time, also a PhD student at the University of Adelaide. Dr Hunter's work was concerned with primary caregiving fathers and the ways in which they are presented, particularly in the media and parenting books. This chapter compares the positions described by primary caregiving fathers and working fathers and presents evidence to suggest that both groups of fathers remain heavily influenced by masculine

identity and paid work expectations. It concludes by suggesting that, while fathering expectations are evolving, fathering itself has not evolved as much as is suggested in wider literature.

Chapter 8 presents findings from interviews with senior managers within commercial organisations, highlighting the continuing gendered nature of flexible working arrangements. In particular, this chapter sets out ideas in relation to how flexibility continues to be discussed in gendered ways, and details the influence that this may have on the ways in which fathers consider flexibility acceptable for them to use. The chapter argues that managers and organisations must maintain an awareness of the gendered nature of flexibility policies, and that the tendency to present these policies as gender-neutral serves primarily to mask their current function as reinforcing gendered expectations in relation to work and parenting.

Finally, the research and its potential implications are discussed in Chapter 9. First, the findings displayed in each chapter are integrated in order to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the significance of the meaning of these results. Following, some potential implications of these findings are explored and discussed.

1.5 Significance and contribution of this research

In Australia, only a small amount of research has had a focus on the intersection of fatherhood and masculinity and how identities are formed and constructed through interactions with and in the organisational environment, including through the use and non-use of flexible working arrangements (though see Connell, 2005b; Russell, 1978, 2002; Russell & Radojevic, 1992). Much research in the area of work-life balance also tends towards a descriptive, rather than critical, analysis which does not explore experiences of flexible leave use and overlooks the gendered nature of organisations and their cultures (Broadbridge & Simpson, 2011; see Skinner, Elton, Auer, & Pocock,

2014; see also Wood & Ridgeway, 2010). Bardoel and colleagues (2008), for example, conducted a review of Australian and New Zealand research on work-life balance, and found that only eight of the 86 studies reviewed had a focus on gender. In some of these eight studies, gender was a secondary rather than a primary focus. A notable subsequent study which had a focus on gender, utilisation of flexible leave policies, and their intersection with the workplace was that conducted by Pini and McDonald (2008). These authors reported that there were a higher number of men relative to women within a local government organisation found to be utilising flexible arrangements, including working part-time; they further highlighted. the need for more critically framed qualitative work in this area with a focus on the language used by men and organisations in discussing flexible working arrangements (see also Smithson & Stokoe, 2005). Sallee (2012, 2013) also observed that it is only recently that research of this nature has begun to focus on men as opposed to women which in the past has served to maintain the societal norm of women's responsibility for care (see also Brennan, 2011).

This thesis argues that how men negotiate their masculine identities in relation to the use of flexible working arrangements may assist in determining effective ways to encourage them to use flexibility (see Chapter 5), and expose ways to challenge the gendered view of leave use (see Chapter 8). Investigating masculinity in relation to use of flexibility may also clarify how to promote cultural change that will support not just career progression for men but also their greater involvement in caregiving. Recognising the gendered nature of flexibility use and negotiation of identity that occurs, lends support to the idea that a cultural shift is required for policy implementation to be effective for men, and highlights the need for the approach taken in this project with a focus on men and a focus on language as a signifier of culture and ideology—in order to explore and describe how culture change might be achieved.

Bardoel and colleagues (2008) also noted the lack of theoretical grounding in this research area. Thus, this research will be heavily framed by and situated within differing critical theoretical perspectives and aims to provide theoretical development in the areas of work-life balance, masculinity studies, and their intersection with organisational studies and scholarly work around fatherhood. This theoretical approach, along with an applied nature, sees this research project as well situated to add to the literature in this field.

Finally, Crenshaw (1989, 1991) suggested that continually examining groups that inhabit categories of 'disadvantage' has political implications. In doing this, the privileging of the characteristics of certain dominant groups' remains implicit. This is one consequence of maintaining a focus on women and their use of flexibility within organisations. As Bacchi (1999) noted, by keeping the focus on those who are considered disadvantaged, these groups are 'problematised.' Bacchi and Eveline wrote that when certain groups (and often their behaviours within certain contexts) are problematised '[l]ittle to no attention is directed to those who maintain institutional power and the processes that allow this to continue' (2009, p. 8). It is important, therefore, to examine those who hold power and privilege as well as those who inhabit categories of 'disadvantage' (Bacchi, 1999; Bacchi & Eveline, 2010; Crenshaw, 1991). The importance of examining those who hold power and privilege will be explored further in Chapter 3.

In addition, as the labour force continues to change and grow, workplaces will need to transform in order to accommodate and retain skilled workers, both men and women, and to support changing families and family structures. The kind of research presented in this thesis is vital in identifying and understanding effective ways in which

to achieve these outcomes. This research, then, has the potential to contribute significantly to policy areas relating to workplaces, productivity, child health and development, family and community, and women's workforce participation. In addition to tangible policy outcomes, this research has great potential to add to and further facilitate discussion around this topic, increasing public and family awareness of the benefits of men utilising flexibility policies in the workplace. This may encourage more businesses to promote a positive workplace culture for men who wish to use flexibility policies. It is also envisioned that this research will aid in facilitating a change in assumptions regarding gender roles and what this means for men and women and their caring responsibilities.

1.6 Summary

In this chapter I have introduced the topic that will be investigated and explored in this thesis: men's use and experiences of flexible work arrangements. This research aims to investigate barriers and facilitators to men's use of flexibility, how men negotiate masculinity and masculine identity in relation to paid work and parenting, and how this may shape men's use of flexibility. In focussing on problematising men this research represents a departure from most existing work on how family life and work are counterposed, and the deeply gendered features of this.

Chapter 2: Taking a deeper look at men's use of flexibility

In the research presented in this thesis, I aim to investigate fathers' uptake of flexible working arrangements and influencing factors in relation to this issue. In the previous chapter I introduced the topic of flexible working arrangements, that is, a working arrangement where the employee has some choice over when, where, how much, and how work is conducted, and briefly discussed why flexibility is an important aspect of working lives. The chapter also briefly discussed why gender is a powerful factor in decisions around the availability of flexibility within organisations. In this chapter, I will go into more depth on the topic of workplace flexibility and its interaction with gender, as well as exploring some consequences of how flexibility is framed.

In Australia, for example, and in other Western countries, the increased push for the use of flexibility in the 1980s and 1990s came as a result of a drive to facilitate women's return to the workforce after they had children (Brennan, 2011; Craig & Mullan, 2010; Hegewisch & Gornick, 2011; Huerta et al., 2013; Kamerman, 2000; Moss & Devon, 2006; Williams, 2000). Subsequently, flexible policies tended to focus on women and how the use of flexibility to return to work could benefit women and families. Until recently, research into flexibility continued to focus primarily on women, which has meant that only one side of the bigger picture relating to gender, families and workplace flexibility has been investigated (Haas & O'Brien, 2010).

Part of the impact of this historic focus on women's use of flexibility and the ways it could benefit them, is that flexibility has come to be seen as a 'woman's issue'; men have only relatively recently begun to be considered in relation to flexibility use

and the benefits associated with it. These issues, and particularly factors contributing to men's decisions around the use of flexibility, will be discussed in this chapter.

2.1 Men's use of flexible working arrangements

Researchers have suggested that the use of flexible working arrangements can have many benefits for men. In particular, it is acknowledged that the use of flexible working arrangements can assist men to gain a more balanced work and home life by enabling more control over how their time is split. Flexibility can assist men to be more involved and engaged fathers, to have more time to focus on their own health and well-being, and enable them to engage in a more equal split of parenting and household work which will contribute to gender equality initiatives (Almqvist & Duvander, 2014; Baxter, 2018; Coltrane, 2010; Cooke & Baxter, 2010; Hochschild, 2012b; Huerta et al., 2013; Williams, 2000).

Flexible working arrangements, and how these may enable work-life balance, is also important to investigate given the changing nature of work and parenting. Women's increasing numbers in the labour force has changed its constitution and has changed the dynamic of workplaces and households (Baxter, 2008, 2013a; Baxter & Smart, 2011; Miller, 2017; Pocock, Skinner, & Williams, 2012; Renda, Baxter, & Alexander, 2009). The need to balance work and life within families has subsequently become more pressing. In addition, organisations often expect employees to be constantly available, and many researchers have linked neoliberal climates to expectations that employees will 'do more with less' (Baines, 2015; Baines & van den Broek, 2016; Connell, 2013b, 2014b; Davies & Bansel, 2005; Larner, 2000; Lynch, 2013; Meagher & Goodwin, 2015; O'Neill & Moore, 2005; Roberts & Walker, 2018). This changing nature of work and organisational cultures may also contribute to changes in the nature of the ideal worker,

what is considered ideal, and what men perceive as ideal. The increasing 'gig economy'—that is, irregular types and forms of work often mediated by technological platforms—has also contributed to unstable and transient employment (Aloisi, 2016; Graham, Hjorth, & Lehdonvirta, 2017; Meagher, 2003; Stewart & Stanford, 2017), although others argue that a kind of 'gig economy' has historically existed in various forms (Flanagan, 2019; Stanford, 2017). This type of employment will not be a focus of this thesis.

Despite these changes, the reasons men cite for not using flexibility have remained relatively constant across decades of research. These factors are related to individuals and to institutional environments; managers and/or co-workers not supporting use of flexibility; career consequences of utilising work-life policies (e.g. missing out on promotions and pay raises); time expectations; and perceptions among men and within organisations of flexible policies being for women and mothers rather than for use by men (Bygren & Duvander, 2006; Cech & Blair-Loy, 2014; Coltrane et al., 2013; Drago et al., 2005; Pini & McDonald, 2008; Rudman & Mescher, 2013). As Gregory and Milner (2009) suggested, men's uptake of these policies is limited by things such as 'perceptions of their entitlement, that is, perceptions that men's claims to family responsibilities are valid' (p. 5).

As will be discussed in more detail throughout this chapter, masculinity and the interaction between masculine identity, fathering, and paid work have a large influence in the decisions men make in relation to the use of flexibility. The gender pay gap, the differences in relative earnings between men and women across their lifetimes, is also a factor here, because men are likely to earn more than women (WGEA, 2014), potentially influencing family choices about any reduction in working hours and related income.

Relatedly, the concept of the ideal worker norm, proposed by Acker (1990), suggests that within organisations the ideal worker is someone who has no outside distractions and can be dedicated to paid work. This concept has typically applied to men (who have had female partners at home to care for children) and continues to have a strong influence on expectations of men (and women) within workplaces (Borgkvist, Moore, Eliott, & Crabb, 2018; Kelly, Ammons, Chermack, & Moen, 2010; Kelly & Kalev, 2006; Kmec, O'Connor, & Schieman, 2014; Rudman & Mescher, 2013). These individual, environmental, and cultural factors will be discussed below.

2.1.1 The role of organisational culture

Workplace culture is an important factor in men's decision making around the uptake of flexible work arrangements. While formal policies may be available within organisations to enable men to work flexibly, men often face informal or cultural discouragement in relation to the uptake and use of flexible policies.

Alvesson (2004) noted that organisational culture may mean many things; however, he defined workplace or organisational culture as:

> shared, moderately stable forms of meaning that are only partially verbalized [sic]. Culture concerns systems of meanings and symbolism involving taken-for-granted elements in need of deciphering. Myths, basic assumptions about human nature, the environment, etc. are seldom directly espoused (p. 317).

Thus, organisational culture, similarly to culture more broadly, is constituted by shared meanings and understandings that are not necessarily verbalised among employees. These meanings and understandings may differ between workplace contexts, and there are likely to be some overarching meanings and understandings

which reflect societal norms (Alvesson, 2004). Ely and Meyerson (2000a, 2000b) also noted that workplace culture cannot be considered as separate from the cultural milieu of broader society. The workplace encapsulated within the walls of an organisation is permeable to the culture which exists outside of it; Acker (1990) and Ely and Meyerson (2000a, 2000b) thus noted that, in line with the broader culture in which they exist, organisations and organisational culture must be considered, among other things, as gendered spaces (see also Ridgeway, 2009, 2014). Haas and Hwang (2007) suggested that 'the cultures of most work organizations [sic] remain grounded in beliefs and values that reinforce the separation of work and family life' (p. 53). They further suggested that the '[r]einforcement of the ideologies of separate spheres and masculine hegemony in the labor [sic] market may help to reproduce gender differences in the ability to combine work and family roles' (p. 53).

Following from these ideas regarding both the reinforcement of gendered familial roles and the permeability of organisational contexts, where family-friendly policies exist within organisations, they generally target women. However, when women use them, they are often penalised for taking time away from work for family reasons (Rudman & Mescher, 2013; Stone, 2008; Williams, 2010). This situation has a two-fold effect. Firstly, the imbalance of policies targeting women reinforces both to men themselves, and to others within the organisation, that these policies are not for use by men, particularly for family reasons. Secondly, it communicates to men that if they do express a desire to, or actually do, use a flexible policy, that they too will be penalised. Haas and Hwang (2007) also made the point that men's need and desire to use flexibility to combat work-family conflict is often underestimated by employers, and so men are not considered in relation to flexible working arrangements. All this has been associated with men reporting cultural or informal discouragement from using a flexible working

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arrangement, particularly for family reasons (Blair-Loy, 2003; Borgkvist, Eliott, Crabb, & Moore, 2018; Borgkvist, Moore, et al., 2018; Coltrane et al., 2013; Cooper, 2000; Gatrell, Burnett, Cooper, & Sparrow, 2014b; Haas, Allard, & Hwang, 2002; Haas & Hwang, 2007, 2016; Pini & McDonald, 2008).

The cultural, or informal, discouragement of men's uptake of flexible leave can, in turn, be seen to reproduce gendered assumptions regarding men's societal and familial roles. Broadly, research points to the idea that organisational cultures and structures can undermine, if not impede, men's utilisation of formal policies and result in consequences for those who seek or choose to utilise them. Haas and Hwang (1995), for example, found in their mail-out survey study in Sweden that there was recognition of men's parenting roles within organisations, and that whilst some had policies and programs in place which offered leave, their organisational culture had not changed to provide informal support to men wanting to utilise the leave policies. As a result, men within these organisations used those policies less than men working within organisations which were found to have a culture in which managers both formally and informally supported men's use of these policies. The researchers highlighted the inconsistency between formal and informal support for utilisation of flexible leave policies and emphasised the need for companies to alter their corporate cultures to support fathers taking leave and the need for more research in this area.

The study by Haas and Hwang (1995) was a seminal study in the investigation and exploration of men's use of workplace flexibility, and the reasons why they may not use flexible working arrangements. Although this study was conducted over 20 years ago, similar findings are still reported. Many subsequent studies have found cultural support to be a factor in men's decisions around uptake of flexible leave policies

(Borgkvist, Moore, et al., 2018; Brandth & Kvande, 1998, 2002, 2018c, 2019; Bygren & Duvander, 2006; Cech & Blair-Loy, 2014; Cooper, 2000; Gatrell & Cooper, 2016; Haas & Hwang, 2019a, 2019b; Meil, Romero-Balsas, & Castrillo-Bustamante, 2019; Moran & Koslowski, 2019; Närvi & Salmi, 2019; O'Brien et al., 2007; Smithson & Stokoe, 2005; Stropnik, Humer, Kanjuo Mrčela, & Štebe, 2019), and that co-workers perceive men who use flexible leave, particularly for family reasons, as less loyal to their organisations (Wayne & Cordiero, 2003). Waters and Bardoel (2006), for example, suggested that social context is very important in determining if an employee uses work-family policies because co-workers and supervisors can either reinforce or resist policy initiatives in their day-to-day practices and interactions at work.

Sallee's (2013) research provided an example of how positive cultural support can assist in men's uptake of flexible leave policies. In her study of university campuses in the United States, she found that there were ways in which faculty and administrative staff worked to challenge the gendered notions of parenthood and provide support for male academic staff wishing to utilise flexible leave, leading to a change in institutional culture. This involved behaviour such as department chairs bringing leave paperwork to male employees and encouraging them to apply for parental leave; allowing and creating opportunities for young children to be included at faculty events; and informally supporting both male and female staff in taking leave. Male faculty subsequently not only felt comfortable using flexible leave policies but were actively encouraged to use them by other staff and, notably, their department heads. This culture change resulted in more men taking up flexible leave arrangements. However, in Reddick and colleague's (2012) interview study of academic fathers they found that their respondents expressed a perceived bias against being involved in parenting, as mothers were still seen as, and

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expected to be, the more active or involved parents. Fathers choosing or wanting to be more involved in parenting was seen to be at odds with academic expectations.

As Smithson and Stokoe (2005) noted, even where a formal policy exists this does not necessarily equate to informal, or cultural, support for its use. In many workplaces it seems that although language and policy has formally changed, 'the participants are still operating within a highly gendered context; so it appears that language change without corresponding culture change is bound to fail' (pp. 156-157).

Extending upon ideas in relation to the influence (and also permeability) of workplace culture, Haas and Hwang (2016) conducted a study to determine whether the broader institutional and cultural environment in Sweden, one of the first countries to introduce flexibility policies specifically targeting men, exerts influence on companies to facilitate father's use of flexibility. They found that 'the male model of work'—that is, the expectation that men will work full-time, or at least work longer hours than women—still remains a barrier to this kind of policy implementation. Further, Brandth and Kvande (2018a) found that fathers in the Nordic states appeared to be continuing to internalise these organisational and cultural expectations, and would be hesitant to take leave if it was not legally inscribed. The occurrence of this internalisation even in Scandinavian countries is noteworthy, as they are widely considered to be leaders of social change in this area, and points to the overarching influence of cultural expectations in relation to parenting and work. Workplace culture, and the influence of broader social culture, then, remains an important and highly influential barrier to men's use of flexible working arrangements for family reasons.

2.1.2 The role of managers

As discussed above, organisational culture and norms are important factors in the offer of, support for, and implementation of, flexible working arrangements, as well as men's perceptions and use of flexibility. Supervisors and managers have been found to be crucial in the promotion, uptake and use, and also facilitation and restriction of flexibility within organisations (Bosoni & Mazzucchelli, 2018; Cooper & Baird, 2015; Michielsens, Bingham, & Clarke, 2013; Pini & McDonald, 2008; Sanders, Zeng, Hellicar, & Fagg, 2016; Wells-Lepley, Thelen, & Swanberg, 2015). However, it must be appreciated that managers are operating within the same organisational culture as their employees.

Research looking specifically at managers in the organisational context has identified that they are often responsible for both approving and managing employee requests for flexibility, while also ensuring that business needs continue to be met and are not impacted by any flexibility arrangements. Supervisors and managers, and particularly senior and upper managers' support or non-support for flexibility, can therefore be seen as an embodiment of the organisations' position in regard to the offer and use of flexibility (Neves, 2011; see also Shoss, Eisenberger, Restubog, & Zagenczyk, 2013, p. for a discussion of supervisors as representatives of the organisation). Supervisors are thus in a difficult position whereby they are expected to both uphold the organisational values which privilege business requirements, but also to consider the needs of their employees and any potential for flexibility to reduce or mitigate work-life conflict (Wells-Lepley et al., 2015).

Managers, then, represent the gatekeepers of workplace flexibility, and, if they are not supportive of flexibility, research suggests that it is unlikely their employees will

request it (see Cooper & Baird, 2015). Much research in this area also points to the idea that CEOs and upper management play an important role in setting the tone of the organisation, and facilitating culture changes within organisations. Sanders and colleagues (2016), for example, found that if a CEO was supportive of flexibility and promoted its use, managers were much more likely to talk to their employees about the use of flexibility as an option, and to approve requests for flexible working arrangements. Other research has also found that middle managers and supervisors look to upper management and CEOs to determine the approach they should take with their employees (Ely & Meyerson, 2000a; Gould, Kulik, & Sardeshmukh, 2018; Koch & Binnewies, 2015; Michielsens et al., 2013; see also Sandhu & Kulik, 2018).

Further, Wells-Lepley and colleagues (2015) found that 'perceived support from a manager's own supervisor was the top predictor of whether a supervisor actually offered FWA' (p. 48). Neves (2011) reported that employees perceived managers as likely to (re)produce the expectations of the organisational environment. He found that if there was a culture of expectation within organisations that employees were physically present in the office to complete their work, managers were perceived as unlikely to allow their employees to deviate from this expectation. The findings suggest that if organisations have a positive culture of upper managerial support for use of flexibility, managers within them are likely to feel supported in approving and managing flexibility requests, and the likelihood that they will approve them is perceived by employees. Based on these findings, the authors suggested that further research is needed to investigate the relationship between organisational culture and supervisor support, and to understand factors which may influence a supervisor's behaviour in relation to flexibility requests.

Neves (2011) also suggested that, in relation to support for and use of flexibility, supervisors have the potential to model normative change within organisations, but that 'factors related to leadership practices and social exchanges remain largely unexplored' (p. 447). Bradley and colleagues (2009) and Scott-Ladd and colleagues (2010) further wrote that in working with upper management (and CEOs) there was the possibility to promote both awareness of the need and support for flexibility. Hornung and colleagues (2009) also suggested that managers need to be made aware of the different forms of flexible arrangements available to employees. Managers thus appear to be in a unique position whereby they are able to challenge and shape organisational expectations and norms, notwithstanding that some research suggests that managers are most likely to reinforce existing norms (Drago et al., 2005; Sanders et al., 2016). This point is important because, as managers can be seen by employees to be enacting the expectations and norms of the organisation (see Sandhu & Kulik, 2018), employees are therefore likely to take cues regarding acceptable behaviour from them (see Allard, Haas, & Hwang, 2007; Koch & Binnewies, 2015; Powell & Mainiero, 1999). As will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 8, supervisors and managers can also (re)produce gendered expectations in relation to the use of flexibility, and who has claim to it within the organisational environment—through talk about flexibility and how flexibility is framed in speech (Ahmed, 2007b, 2015).

2.1.3 Perceived (and actual) career impact

Research has identified that, like women, when men do take time away from paid work, particularly for family reasons, their careers may be impacted. This career impact presents another barrier to men deciding to utilise flexible working arrangements, partly because they do not want to be seen to be deviating from the culture of their

organisation, and relatedly because they do not want to be seen to be deviating from the expectation that they will be dedicated to paid work (Brandth & Kvande, 2018a; Coltrane et al., 2013). Many researchers have noted the potential for fathers deviating from organisational expectations to be stigmatised (Brescoll et al., 2013; Miyajima & Yamaguchi, 2017; Vandello et al., 2013) with some terming these career impacts the 'flexibility stigma' (Cech & Blair-Loy, 2014; Coltrane, 2004; Coltrane et al., 2013; Rudman & Mescher, 2013). As Rudman and Mescher (2013) noted, women also face these career impacts (see also Stone, 2008; Stone & Hernandez, 2013); however, within the organisational environment and broader culture, women deviating from dedication to paid work fits more acceptingly with cultural expectations and ideas of who will perform caretaking within families (see, for example, Kuperberg & Stone, 2008).

In a variety of studies, men have consistently reported that the perceived negative impact that the use of flexibility would have on their careers is a reason they are reluctant to use flexible working arrangements. Reddick and colleagues (2012), for example, found that male participants in their qualitative study reported not using flexible arrangements because they thought it would impact upon their opportunities for promotion and pay raises. The participants perceived this threat to their careers, they stated, based upon cultural expectations they felt within the workplace to show dedication to work (relating again to the ideal worker norm) (see also Drago et al., 2005). As a result, the participants reported taking up more traditional gender roles in order to deal with work life conflict and avoid career penalties.

Similarly, in their Australian research, Sanders and colleagues (2016) reported that men found using flexible work options difficult, even when they were available for them. Their male participants reported that management in their organisations had

created an environment where they felt judged when using flexible working arrangements. Thus, impact on career progression was cited as a factor in this research—because participants were concerned about what their managers thought about the use of flexibility. More than being just a perception of career impact, one participant stated he was told by his boss that he would not get promoted if he worked part-time. This attitude toward men's use of flexibility is also reflected in Connell's (2006b) research. She found that the male employees in her Australian study believed that working long hours and extra hours would impress their managers and be good for job promotion and job security. Therefore, going from full-time to part-time work was seen as a bad career move, even though the organisation offered a formal pathway for men to do this. Other research has found that long work hours are rewarded within workplaces (Cha & Weeden, 2014; Landivar, 2015), effectively undermining the ability (and the desire) of employees to use flexible working arrangements and receive career rewards.

Further, research has found that, in addition to men's perceptions about the career impact that might result from their use of flexibility, objectively men do face career consequences when they use flexibility for family reasons—not unlike the career consequences women face after the birth of a child (Sanders et al., 2016). Coltrane and colleagues (2013), for example, found in their study in the United States that men who used a formal flexible arrangement, and particularly those who worked part-time, were less likely to get pay rises and less likely to get promoted than those who did not use flexibility (see also Cooper, 2000; Harrington, Van Deusen, & Ladge, 2010). The researchers also found that there was an impact on career progression, though no difference was found in this regard between their male and female participants.

In contrast, Coltrane and colleagues (2013) found that when male employees had children and were working full-time, they were perceived as more favourable by their organisations and managers, and were more likely to receive pay rises and get promotions. These authors suggested that this difference can be explained as the 'fatherhood premium'—whereby men who are seen to be fulfilling the expected and accepted role of breadwinner are looked upon more favourably in organisations; this phenomenon is also associated with higher earnings for men who are fathers compared with men who are not fathers (Bear & Glick, 2017; Coltrane, 1996; Fox, 2017; Glauber, 2008, 2018). Participants in Harrington and colleagues' (2010) study also described how being a father had given them 'a greater aura of credibility, maturity and responsibility' (p. 22) in the workplace (see also Ladge, Humberd, Watkins, & Harrington, 2015). Thus, it can be seen that men's perceptions about the potential for their careers to be impacted by the use of flexible working arrangements have a basis in their objective treatment received within organisations – and that this is an important barrier to consider in relation to men's use of flexibility.

2.1.4 The inherently masculine nature of workplaces

Many researchers have argued that the workplace is an inherently masculine space (Acker, 1990; Atkinson, 2011; Berdahl, Cooper, Glick, Livingston, & Williams, 2018; Collinson & Hearn, 2005; Durbin, 2010; Ely & Kimmel, 2018; Hearn, 2014c; Kanter, 1977; Kerfoot & Knights, 1993; Reid, O'Neill, & Blair-Loy, 2018; Whitehead, 2014). As will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter, there exists a powerful link between masculine identity and paid work. The concept of the ideal worker within this space, an employee who is able to dedicate themselves to work with no outside distractions (Acker, 1990), is thus an important consideration. Historically, the ideal

worker has been a male employee because men have typically had female partners to manage home and caretaking responsibilities, leaving them free to engage almost exclusively with the public sphere of paid work. The ideal worker being male has meant that, not only have organisations come to be predicated upon the idea that men are superior employees compared to women, but that men are expected to meet certain organisational expectations in relation to paid work—that is, that men will be dedicated to work full-time and be financial providers (Acker, 1990; Chen, Peterson, Phillips, Podolny, & Ridgeway, 2012; Coltrane, 1996; Connell, 2005b). These points have consequences for both men and women within organisational spaces. The concept of the ideal worker norm and how it relates to this research will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 3.

Acker (1990) further explained that while the concepts of 'job' and 'employee' are presented as gender-neutral, they become gendered through relational interactions within the workplace, and come to have gendered expectations attached to them. She describes that the action, emotion, identity and meaning of a job and an organisation, are made distinct through the masculine and feminine. Of particular importance to men's use of or desire to use flexible working arrangements, children and caretaking are excluded from the workplace and value in most organisations is given to the masculine—and to men's performance of the masculine (see also Blair-Loy & Cech, 2017; Ely & Meyerson, 2000b; Lee, 2018; West & Zimmerman, 1987).

More recently, Berdahl and colleagues (2018) argued that workplaces provide spaces for men to engage in 'masculinity contests.' They proposed that masculinity contests emerge from toxic masculinity, which they define as involving the need (or men's perception of the need) to compete with and assert dominance over others:

Work becomes a masculinity contest when organizations focus not on mission but on masculinity, enacted in endless "mine's bigger than yours" contests to display workloads and long schedules (as in law and medicine), cut corners to out-earn everyone else, or shoulder unreasonable risks (as in blue-collar jobs or finance). The coin of the realm shifts in different industries but the role of toxic masculinity does not. We argue that much of what simply appears to be neutral practices and what it takes to get ahead at work is actually counterproductive behaviour aimed at proving manhood on the job (pp. 423-424).

Ahmed (2007a) further argued that, within organisations, employees can become marked as different when they are seen to be unable to meet organisational, and more broadly cultural and social, expectations and demands (see also Acker, 1990; Ahmed, 2015; Blair-Loy & Cech, 2017; Ely & Kimmel, 2018; Kelly et al., 2010; Lee, 2018; Moss-Racusin, Phelan, & Rudman, 2010; Rudman & Mescher, 2013; Rudman & Phelan, 2008). Munsch and colleagues (2018) also suggested that in organisational contexts where masculinity is revered, while men may not personally endorse the cultural norms of the organisation, they may believe that others endorse those norms, which discourages individuals from speaking or acting against them—including the use of flexible working arrangements (see also Lester, 2011; Miyajima & Yamaguchi, 2017; Munsch, Ridgeway, & Williams, 2014). Hence, the masculine nature of organisations comes to be unquestioned and unquestionable.

Further, there are norms within workplaces which re(produce) masculine norms and expectations, maintaining the perceived need for men to act in certain ways. These norms restrict the ways that are acceptable for men (and women) to behave in the organisational context; however, at the same time, when men adhere to these

expectations they receive benefits as employees. As Bacchi and Eveline (2009) argued, attention needs to be paid to whom within the organisational context benefits from these norms and expectations. It could further be argued that, through the threat of being labelled as anything other than masculine within an inherently masculine space, how men work can be controlled in ways which benefit the organisation more than they benefit the individual employee (see also Ahmed, 2007b, 2015; Bacchi, 2009). Pini and McDonald (2008), for example, found that men are more likely to use flexibility in ways which will further their careers, such as for work-related education or in an informal rather than a formal manner (see also Brescoll, Glass, & Sedlovskaya, 2013; Reid, 2015). For men, the ability to use flexibility in certain ways can facilitate their maintenance of an image or perception as an 'ideal worker' (see, for example, Reid, 2015). That is why Rudman and Mescher (2013) suggested that the flexibility stigma is actually a 'femininity stigma' in that, men who behave like women in organisations, including in relation to flexibility (that is, men who use flexibility for family reasons), are penalised, just as women who utilise flexibility are penalised (see also Bear & Glick, 2017; Stone, 2008).

Other researchers have noted that emotion is another way in which certain behaviours or attributes are delineated as feminine, and thus culturally unacceptable for men in the workplace. Ahmed (2007b), for example, argued that certain emotions in specific situations are intrinsically linked to women and to caregiving; men are encouraged to be stoic, independent, and in control (Connell, 2005a), which is at odds with nurturance and caregiving (see also Brandth & Kvande, 1998; Chin, Daiches, & Hall, 2011; Chin, Hall, & Daiches, 2011; Hearn, 2014c; see also Rudman & Glick, 1999; Rudman & Glick, 2008). Thus, displays of emotion (other than those which conform to

masculinity) are minimised in workplaces as something contradictory to masculinity. As Ely and Kimmel (2018) wrote:

> just as workplaces' rational profit-maximiser side is masculine gendered, so too is its presumed-rational emotion-minimizer side: masculinity contest cultures are predicated—and prey—on men's insecurity, all the while setting up a competition whose purpose is to keep these feelings at bay. In masculinity contest cultures, men take great pains to demonstrate their fit with conventional masculine images in order to prove their worth as workers and as men (p. 629).

Men's discouragement from engaging with and expressing emotion, and by extension the femininely characterised familial care obligations, is not only a product of but (re)produces and maintains masculine workplace culture. The restrictions that this kind of culture imposes on men (and women) impacts upon the ability of fathers to deviate from cultural expectations, including stepping away from full-time paid work.

2.1.5 Men's perceptions of flexible work arrangements as a privilege

Taking into account factors such as those described above, it can be seen that men may not see the use of flexibility for family reasons as something 'for them'. This is particularly so when it is considered that organisational environments and contexts (re)produce and hold men up to cultural expectations of manhood and masculinity in relation to work and family. As we will see in Chapter 5, it appears these factors combine to create a discourse of privilege around men's use of flexible work arrangements. If flexible working arrangements are not 'for them', then any use of it by men appears out of the ordinary and like a privilege.

Susan Lewis (1997) originally proposed the concept of 'sense of entitlement' when referring to men and the use of flexible working arrangements. Lewis' initial conception proposed that, in order for uptake of family-friendly polices to occur, there needed to be a sense of entitlement among employees both to express their need for flexible working arrangements and to have their needs met. For men, this sense of entitlement is affected by numerous factors, including the cultural and organisational expectations that they will behave as ideal workers within organisations. These organisational expectations also affect women, however, as mentioned, women using flexibility is much more of an accepted norm and so these needs are perceived as more likely to be met.

Other researchers have also investigated and expanded upon the idea of men's lack of a sense of entitlement to use flexibility. Gatrell and Cooper (2016), for example, noted that cultural and organisational expectations about the roles that men and women take on in families continue to impact upon the entitlements that men and women are likely to feel. They suggest that while women may feel less entitled to career advancement, men may feel less entitled to use workplace policies designed to aid in work-life balance for family reasons, and that organisational assumptions about who is responsible for caring and breadwinning in families has an influence on these perceptions of entitlement (see also Fujimoto, Azmat, & Härtel, 2013; Gregory & Milner, 2009; Ridgeway, 2009; Smithson & Stokoe, 2005). Further, Brandth and Kvande (2002) suggested that when men are considering taking leave and/or utilising flexibility polices, they must negotiate with the structures created by the organisational and state policies, which in turn influence the creation of cultures which foster ideas about privileges and rights in relation to leave (see also Graham, McKenzie, & Lamaro, 2018; Kaufman, 2018). Men are much less likely to feel an entitlement to flexible

working arrangements when working within a culture where these arrangements are implicitly targeted at or informally understood as being 'for women' (Gatrell & Cooper, 2016).

Specifically, in the Australian context, both Baxter (2000) and Cooper and Baird (2015) found in their research that female managers were in general much more supportive of flexible working arrangements than male managers, and that male employees described flexible working arrangements as something that needed to be earned from their employers. This sense of needing to earn flexible working arrangements further speaks to the idea of it being a privilege to use them. Cooper and Baird (2015) also found that male employees felt less right to request flexibility within their organisation. When considering that Australia remains a highly patriarchal culture which implicitly supports a traditional division of labour through its policies (see Baird, 2011; Baird & Murray, 2014; Berg, Kossek, Baird, & Block, 2013; Brennan, 2011; Chalmers, Campbell, & Charlesworth, 2005; Charlesworth & Heron, 2012; Connell, 2013a; Connell, 2005b; Craig et al., 2010; Dreyfus, 2013; Gray, 2013; Pocock et al., 2013; Pocock et al., 2012), this cultural context provides a partial explanation for why Australian men might not feel entitled to utilise flexible working arrangements. These ideas about men's entitlement to flexible working arrangements will be explored further in the analytic work presented in Chapter 5. Furthermore (and also explored in Chapter 5), as gender is relational, constructing men's use of flexibility as deviant and discouraging their use of flexibility for family reasons also has the effect of constructing women's use of flexibility for family reasons as usual and as a right within the organisational environment (Lewis, 1997; Sanders et al., 2016). These constructions assist in implicitly maintaining women's responsibility for childcare, and in turn relieves men of responsibility.

Collectively, these discourses of privilege, entitlement and individual choice can work to maintain gendered divisions of labour, and gendered expectations within the workplace about who has the right to request and use a flexible working arrangement. Thus, this narrative needs to be challenged and altered to encourage men's uptake of flexible working arrangements.

2.2 The influence of paid work on the fathering identity

Social structures and institutions are influential in encouraging men (and women) to maintain the construction of a traditionally gendered division of public and private labour (Adams & Coltrane, 2004; Coltrane, 2004, 2010; Daly, 1996; Edley & Wetherell, 1999; Halford, 2006; Lupton, 2006; Maume, 2016; Pedulla & Thébaud, 2015; Thébaud, 2010). Specifically, institutions such as organisations, social policy, and work-life balance initiatives can influence the construction of fathering identity because they represent, normalise, and/or problematise certain practices and roles (Griswold, 2012; Marsiglio et al., 2013). Institutions reflect what is expected and acceptable in a specific sociocultural context and may assist in explaining why it is difficult for gendered parenting patterns to be disrupted.

Although men and women now exist in both the public and private realms and gendered representations are not exclusive to each realm, the public sphere and inclusion in the labour market has typically been associated with masculinity, while the private and domestic sphere has typically been associated with care work, family and femininity. Halford wrote that:

[t]hese gender divisions have had significant implications for the discursive construction of fatherhood and for everyday fathering practices. While motherhood has historically been seen as a central aspect of feminine identities,

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fatherhood has always competed with other elements in the construction of masculinity, particularly with paid work (2006, p. 385).

Fatherhood has also been associated with different things than motherhood—authoritarianism and breadwinning rather than emotion and caring. These have different practical consequences, such as men having 'difficulty seeing themselves in the role of stay-at-home spouse and primary caregiver. Part of this derived from their own sense of career identity' (Harrington et al., 2010, p. 20). In their research, Harrington and colleagues found that most of the fathers in their study reported a strong connection between their careers and their identities. Many stated that:

> being a stay at home [sic] spouse did not fit with their views of themselves as a primary breadwinner. Equally important was the feeling that for a man to choose this option might be seen as not living up to his financial provider role in the eyes of others (p. 20).

One participant in their study went as far as saying that there is a point of embarrassment or stigma when a man spends too much time with his child, such as with a stay-at-home father. Further, Ladge and colleagues' (2015) suggested that it was apparent that participants in their study felt a strong connection to their careers and felt the expectation of dedication to their careers. The authors noted that '[m]any participants expressed that they wished their career identity were not such a big part of their overall sense of self, but that it was unavoidable' (p. 158). When asked about fatherhood, the participants defined themselves in traditional ways, discussing being a breadwinner and provider. The authors documented that '[o]verall, we found that the combination of involved and traditional views of fathering led participants to express an ambiguous sense of themselves as fathers' (p. 158). Ladge and colleagues suggested that this

demonstrated that men desire to be more involved yet still defined themselves in contradictory terms, making it difficult for them to act upon their desired behaviours; however, an important point to consider here is that traditional views of fathering remain influential in father identity and enactment. How masculine identity and fathering identity relate to paid work are important considerations in any discussion of facilitators and barriers to men's use of flexibility, and men's decisions around the use of flexibility.

2.2.1 Masculinity, fathering and paid work

In addition to organisational factors that influence men's use of flexible working arrangements, it is necessary to consider the intersection of fathering, paid work, and masculinity. Milkie and Denny (2014) and Miller (2011) note that expectations of fathers and fathering practices have changed over time (see also Brannen & Nilsen, 2006). As an example of these changes, even a few decades ago it was unusual for fathers to be involved in prenatal appointments or even to be at the birth of their child (Baxter & Smart, 2011; Doucet, 2006; Milkie & Denny, 2014). However, more recently fathers' expressed desires to be involved, and expectations that fathers will be more involved in all aspects of child-rearing than they had previously, have become the norm (Dolan & Coe, 2011; Miller, 2017; O'Brien et al., 2007; Suwada, 2017b). Suwada (2017b) suggested that these changing expectations likely reflect the complex and changing nature of societal institutions and what is considered good or normative fathering.

Edley (2001) and Shirani and colleagues (2012) further suggested that changing fathering expectations provide evidence of the changing nature of masculinity, because masculine identity and fathering identity are intertwined. Edley suggested that these changing expectations, and fathers objectively being more involved in parenting,

promoted the idea that masculinity and fathering identity is evolving. Shirani and colleagues' research provides an interesting comparison of fathers with differing levels of involvement, suggesting that while fathering involvement, and the positions that fathers can and do take in relation to fathering, are changing, more traditional ideas and enactments of fathering linked to masculinity remain.

These more traditional ideas of fathering can be linked to the concept of hegemonic masculinity and what the achievement of masculinity requires of men. The concept of hegemonic masculinity was first proposed by Connell (1987; see also Connell. 2005a), and outlines that there is a dominant ideal of what it is to be masculine. This dominant ideal can vary across and within societies and cultures, but it encourages men to adhere to certain behaviours in attempts to achieve it. Thus, these more traditional ideas of fathering have an impact upon the way that fathering is performed (see Connell, 1987, 2005a; Coltrane, 1996; Coltrane et al., 2013; Shirani et al., 2012; Suwada, 2017). In other words, to legitimise their status as both fathers and men, men are influenced to perform fatherhood in certain ways. This performance has historically included financial provision and engagement with paid work almost to the exclusion of engagement with activities within the private sphere, which has been considered more suitable for women (Baxter, 2018, Connell, 2005b).

Other research has found that young people still associate manhood with having a job (Edley & Wetherell, 1999; McDowell, 2003; Suwada, 2017b), and being a father with being able to provide financially for family and children specifically (Brandth & Kvande, 2002; Harrington et al., 2010; Helman, Malherbe, & Kaminer, 2019; Schmidt, 2018). Indeed, studies have shown that while many men and women now approach parenthood with egalitarian views regarding the split of childcare and domestic labour,

once a baby is born, the division of labour tends to be split in terms of more traditional gender roles—women assume the bulk of responsibility for childcare as well as housework and men undertake paid work, providing financially (Brandth & Kvande, 1998; Kaźmierczak & Karasiewicz, 2019; Lyonette & Crompton, 2015; Miller, 2010, 2011; Riggs & Bartholomaeus, 2018; Singleton & Maher, 2005).

The link between masculinity, fathering, and paid work has a profound influence upon what actions men feel are acceptable in the workplace—including taking periods of leave and using flexibility for family reasons (Coltrane et al., 2013; Haas & Hwang, 2016; Kelly et al., 2010; Williams, 2010). In previous research, for example, both male managers and employees have been found to state that family life was more important than work, however they did not engage with their families and perform the child-rearing necessary to evidence this assertion—they continued to preference paid work by dedicating more time to it (Harrington et al., 2010; Ladge et al., 2015; Pahl, 1995; Shirani et al., 2012).

Schmidt (2018) argued that given the strong link between financial provision and fathering, some fathers may consider financial provision to signal their involvement and care for their children. Further, women can also be financial providers but there is a stronger cultural link between financial provision and fathering, which can be seen to influence men's decisions in relation to fathering and work. The link between masculinity, fathering, and paid work will be explored in more detail in Chapters 5 and 7.

2.2.2 Masculinity (and fathering) in Australia

Masculinity has a distinct relationship with fathering in the Australian context. Connell (2013a, 2014d; 2005a, 2005b), discussing the history and development of Australian masculinity, noted that masculinity expectations in Australia encourage men to behave in certain, culturally specific ways (see also Dempsey & Hewitt, 2012; Miller & Nash, 2016; Murphy, 2002). For example, she argued that mateship—something perceived as a core aspect of Australian masculinity—has had a large influence on how men interact with one another, on the social and cultural expectations of Australian men, and on how they should behave (see also Connell, 2014a; Dyrenfurth, 2007; Dyrenfurth, 2015; Garton, 1998; Murrie, 1998; Summers, 1975).

Murrie (1998) noted that masculine identity and mateship stems from numerous historical legends that came to represent archetypal masculinity in Australia. Australia is a colonial society with a convict history. Manual labour, physical strength, stoicism, and endurance came to be culturally valued and revered (Dyrenfurth, 2015; Ward, 1966). For many decades, men also outnumbered women in most colonies (Dyrenfurth, 2015). Mateship, a kind of social contract in which men are expected to support other men who display appropriate and accepted masculinity, grew out of these conditions and became solidified in the Australian psyche after World War I with the Gallipoli Myth (Garton, 1998, 2002; Murrie, 1998; Ward, 1966; Webster, 2007).

Murrie (1998) also argued that Australian masculinity heavily relies on mateship. Mateship can be seen to rest on the same kind of tenants as Connell's (2005a) conception of hegemonic masculinity, which she saw to involve inclusion of what is considered masculine and the exclusion of what is considered feminine in order to uphold a gender structure which privileges the masculine. This means the exclusion of

emotion, care work, and a focus on what Australian men do rather than what they might feel (see Whitman, 2013). For action (and enaction of masculine identity) to be a focus, it must occur in the public sphere; thus, Australian masculinity has come to be heavily reliant on what men are able to achieve at work. That is, how men are able to show or perform their masculinity (West & Zimmerman, 1987) through engagement with and in paid work, which also involves a rejection of the emotion associated with the familial. Australian masculinity, then, is in part maintained by the dedication of Australian men to financial provision within families. Stepping away from full-time paid work in order to engage more fully in caregiving could therefore be viewed as an affront to what it means to be masculine in Australia.

Brennan (2011) noted that the development and progression of Australian legislation in relation to family life and parenting has also had a large impact on Australian masculinity, by making implicit the roles that Australian men and women should play within the family unit. The Paid Parental Leave policy developed in 2011, for example, is skewed towards providing mothers but not fathers with time off after the birth of a child (Baxter & Hewitt, 2013; see Brennan, 2011; Cooke & Baxter, 2010; Dreyfus, 2013; Gray, 2013; Huerta et al., 2013; see also Pocock, 2005b; Pocock et al., 2013; Pocock et al., 2012). The masculinist history surrounding Australian families and the development of family policies within this culture reinforced the breadwinner/caregiver (masculine/feminine) dichotomy. Subsequently, the development of a particular kind of masculine and fathering identity in Australian culture was encouraged and reinforced—one heavily reliant upon performing the breadwinner role.

Further, Australia's strong historical belief in the male breadwinner model has arguably impacted upon the government's willingness to assemble more egalitarian legislation in this area (Baxter & Hewitt, 2013; Brennan, 2011; Miller & Nash, 2016). Pocock and colleagues (2013) noted that Australia lacked a national system of Paid Parental Leave (PPL) until 2011, despite many previous recommendations by academics and policy makers to create one. Australia was the second last OECD country to introduce a PPL scheme, and Pocock and colleagues argued that the delay 'largely reflected three things: a strongly masculinist general culture; the dominance of a "male breadwinner" model of the worker; and the absence of a contributory insurance-based system of workplace benefits' (p. 599). The historically difficult nature of enterprise bargaining agreements that workers had to fight for to gain access to paid leave and access to flexibility (Charlesworth & Heron, 2012; Pocock et al., 2013), and the patriarchal social climate of Australia (Baxter & Hewitt, 2013; Connell, 2013a; Miller & Nash, 2016), has meant that a reliance on gendered behavioural patterns has been etched into Australian families' work and care arrangements.

Expectations of father involvement have been changing around the world, and Australia is no exception. These changing expectations and the seeming recognition of these expectations by Australian fathers, has seen them now reporting being more involved in care activities than in the past. Lupton and Barclay (1997) interviewed fathers in the 1990s and found that most saw themselves as bystanders and helpers, while mothers were seen as responsible for care work. More recently, Baxter and Smart (2011) found that 41% of fathers of young children reported changing diapers/nappies and involvement in other care activities, an increase over previous decades (though still less than mothers). This increase points to a possible renegotiation of Australia masculinity. Nonetheless, this increase in involvement does not necessarily mean that mothers are

not still primarily held responsible for childcare and for the emotional labour associated with this care. Singleton and Maher (2005), for example, found that Australian fathers would engage in caregiving and other unpaid labour around the house, but only at the direction of their female partners (see also Riggs & Bartholomaeus, 2018). More recently, Brady and colleagues (2017) found that some of their male participants thought that, as males, they were not helpful to infants. Gray (2013) also found that 'in the Australian context fathers widen the gender gap by extending their paid work time upon becoming a father' (Gray, 2013, p. 172). Gray explained this effect as these men 'doing gender'. By contrast, Baxter and colleagues (2013a) found that Australian women decrease their involvement with paid work after children are born.

Accordingly, it appears Australian men are engaging in more caregiving behaviours now than in the past, but women are still held responsible for the majority of caregiving, and for the organization of unpaid labour including instructing their male partners in how and when to perform caregiving and household chores. Although this gendered dynamic is not specific to Australia, the distinct nature of Australian masculinities contextualises the attention that needs to be paid to how to interrupt the associations between masculine identity, fathering identity and paid work, and to encourage men to utilise flexible working arrangements to facilitate their engagement with all aspects of child-rearing.

As will be further explored in Chapters 5-7, research suggests that fathers recognise the changing expectations in relation to parenting and express a desire to be more involved in caregiving, but there is a lack of research detailing how Australian men (and men in general) appear to be negotiating these changing expectations. Thus, we need to look at how men are engaging with these expectations, whether they are

supported to engage with them, or whether they are finding seemingly culturally-acceptable ways to explain why they cannot engage with them. Further, if there are men who are using flexibility in order to engage more fully in parenting and involved fathering, we need to investigate how they negotiate their competing identities and explain their ability to do this, in order to determine effective approaches to encouraging men's uptake of flexible working arrangements.

It should be noted that father engagement in caregiving activities may vary according to socioeconomic status, due in part to complexities affecting working class women and men. They appear to hold more traditional views regarding gender roles within families (Brandth & Kvande, 2002; Coles, 2008; Connell, 2005a; see also Fuwa, 2004; Hook, 2006; though see Shows & Gerstel, 2009 for an example of shared care in working class families). In addition, working class men and women may have limited resources to deal with work-life conflict and working class men are suggested to experience stronger pressure to conform than their peers—so they may be more likely to fall back on gendered patterns of care and paid work (Coles, 2008; Connell, 2000, 2005a).

2.3 Consequences of men's use of flexible working arrangements for gender equity

Challenging pervasive cultural constructions around both men's parenting roles and their entitlement to use flexibility is of vital importance—not just for men themselves, but for the role that men's use of flexibility can play in progressing gender equity in workplaces and families. Men's use of flexible work arrangements has the potential not only to assist men to better balance work and life responsibilities, but also to assist women in being able to engage more fully in the workforce should they choose.

Research indicates that fathers' greater work hours are associated with their lower participation in childcare (Baxter, 2007, 2012a, 2018; Cooke & Baxter, 2010; Huerta et al., 2013; Koslowski, 2011; Strazdins, Baxter, & Li, 2017; Tanaka & Waldfogel, 2007), and in general men's long work hours are associated with their lower participation in household chores. In heterosexual couples, lower participation in these activities by men subsequently places more responsibility on the female partner to engage with home and care tasks. Shafer, Kelly, Buxton, and Berkman (2018) found that women partnered to men who worked longer hours also report higher levels of stress, while, men partnered to women who worked longer hours reported no differences in stress. The authors theorised that this may be because men do not take on extra home and care responsibilities in these circumstances (see also Treas & De Ruijter, 2008), and others have found that men are more likely to outsource home responsibilities in these instances (Cooke & Baxter, 2010; Craig, Perales, Vidal, & Baxter, 2016; Gupta, 2007; Meagher, 2003).

Further, men utilising flexibility has the potential to reduce 'the effects of work hours on family health and on women's labor [sic] force exits, which contribute to gender inequality' (Shafer et al., 2018, p. 423). Men stepping away from long work hours could assist in reducing the negative impact men's overwork has been found to have upon women's participation in the workforce. Stone (2008), for example, found that women are more likely (than men) to leave the workforce if their partner is working long hours, while men's participation in the labour force remains relatively unaffected by the amount of hours worked by female partners (see also Cha, 2010).

While Stone's (2008) research derived from the American context, time use studies in Australia show a similar pattern of women doing more unpaid labour,

particularly when their partners work longer hours and regardless of whether the female partners themselves also engage in paid work (ABS, 2019; Baxter & Hewitt, 2013; Baxter & Smart, 2011; Craig et al., 2016; Powell & Craig, 2015). Baxter and Hewitt (2013), however, demonstrated that, unlike in the United States, the domestic division of labour in Australia is more heavily influenced by the male breadwinner culture, such that 'Australian women's absolute earnings do not provide the same level of autonomy to reduce their time on housework that has been observed in the US' (p. 49). Men's greater availability through the use of flexibility and reduction of work hours, though, may provide somewhat of a catalyst for challenging the cultural reliance on the male breadwinner, leading to the opportunity of relief for women who take on the bulk of care and home responsibilities when men work long hours. It may also reduce the stress associated with these activities.

In addition, research demonstrates that, typically, long working hours are linked to more promotions and higher pay (Cha & Weeden, 2014; Landivar, 2015; O'Neill & O'Reilly, 2010; Wright, 2014). Men's longer work hours means they are more likely than women to be promoted and for their earnings to be higher, and this is reflected in the percentages of men in high-paying jobs as opposed to women (Strazdins, 2016; Strazdins, Welsh, Korda, Broom, & Paolucci, 2016). Men in these positions are also more likely to be fathers than women in these positions are to be mothers. The South Australian Equal Opportunity Commissioner recently wrote that progression of women's equality relies on a more equal share of care and work (Vincent, 2018). Men stepping away (even temporarily) from longer working hours and providing women with more opportunity to enter back in to or remain in the workforce, thus also provides women with the opportunity to progress their careers through more availability at work and less responsibility at home. Stone (2008) also argued that what really needs to be

challenged is the way that work dedication is viewed and rewarded; men choosing to step away from long hours may also work to challenge the normality of these hours, and the associated perception that dedication to paid work and/or should be rewarded with promotion and higher pay.

Lyn Strazdins, an Australian researcher in the field of work and families, wrote in a blog post that these conditions of long working hours and rewards for putting work before family is an important issue when considering gender equality because it is usually women who are unable to meet these demands:

> Without any upper limits, we have allowed having and keeping a good job to become a tournament of endurance based on hours worked. Those who don't want to or are unable to enter that tournament instead opt for part-time jobs, and this nearly always locks out good pay and good conditions, and of course economic security, superannuation, and last but not least, being able to influence the agenda. All of this matters to gender equality (Strazdins, 2016)

Strazdins (2016) goes on to suggest that rewarding longer hours also discriminates against people who have other commitments, such as caregiving, and these people are usually women. However, as Strazdins writes, 'the easy option is to tinker with what women do but ignore the wider, systemic issues that both women and men work and live within.' I argue in this thesis that in order to address these systemic issues, it will be necessary to challenge the work and care norms men enact, and to provide support to men engaging in behaviours contrary to these norms.

As Strazdins (2016) alluded to in her blog post, increasing men's use of flexibility will not, on its own, propel greater gender equality. For example, research has

found that even when men do use flexibility and spend more time in the home, they do not necessarily take on more unpaid household labour. Women have been found to carry the responsibilities of household chores and childcare to a greater extent than men even when these women are also engaged in paid work (Baxter & Hewitt, 2013; Bianchi, Sayer, Milkie, & Robinson, 2012; Cooke & Baxter, 2010; Craig et al., 2016; Folbre & Bittman, 2004), though this can differ by cultural context (see Deutsch, 2007; Evertsson & Nermo, 2004).

Arlie Hochschild (2012b) famously termed this unequal distribution of household labour 'the second shift' for women. She described the reluctance of men to take on household labour even as women entered into the workforce in greater numbers. Consequently, women were responsible for both their own paid work and the majority of the unpaid household and care responsibilities. Baxter and Hewitt (2013) also reported that although women's workforce participation (and thus their contribution to household earnings) has increased over the past few decades, the differing amounts of household labour that men and women report doing has remained relatively stable (ABS, 2018; Baxter, 2008; Cooke & Baxter, 2010; Craig et al., 2016; Huerta et al., 2013). Bianchi and colleagues (2012) have also noted, however, that childcare remains more gendered than housework, and that men's greater share of housework generally results from women's reduction in housework hours. It appears, then, that other factors will be of relevance in encouraging a change in the way men work and participate in household labour and childcare. Namely, a cultural shift is required leading to the challenge and rejection of traditional gender roles and attitudes which, in combination with the increase in men's use of flexibility, may result in the adoption of a more egalitarian split of household and unpaid labour, including childcare.

Griswold (2012) noted that culture is both influencing and can be influenced (see also Ridgeway, 2009, 2011). Considering that idea here, men's use of flexibility has the potential to both disrupt current notions of gender roles within families and workplaces, and to forge new notions and norms regarding familial and work responsibilities. However, the facilitators and barriers to this need to be explored to determine how this shift can occur.

2.4 Consequences of men's use of flexible working arrangements for women

Arlie Hochschild (1997, 2012a, 2012b) has written extensively on the burden that the second shift places on women, as well as the 'emotional labour' that women often do at home and at work. It is necessary to examine this because, as Hochschild (2003, 2012b) and Williams (2000; 2010) suggested, reducing this load would free up more mental energy for women to put towards pursuing gender equality in workplaces and at home, and may also encourage men to realise the magnitude of the mental load that they generally have not been performing.

The concept of emotional labour refers to a form of emotion regulation which is done in public, usually in the workplace in the course of a person's job, to produce a certain visible display. For example, this involves a person acting to supress or express a particular emotional state in order to portray themselves in certain, often culturally expected and acceptable ways, and often to produce a desired state in another. Hochschild (1997) theorised that emotional labour is often shaped by social institutions and structures, including societal and cultural norms regarding the expression of emotion and what is and is not considered appropriate. In the context of organisations, emotional labour refers to the expectation of employees to manage their feelings in line with organisationally defined rules (see also Wharton, 2009).

Hochschild (2012) acknowledges that both men and women can perform emotional labour, however she describes emotional labour as a distinctly feminine characteristic largely because of the ways in which girls and women are socialised to be considerate of and to put others' needs before their own (2012a, 2012b). She wrote:

On the whole, women tend to specialize in the flight attendant side of emotional labor, men in the bill collection side of it. This specialization of emotional labor in the marketplace rests on the different childhood training of the heart that is given to girls and to boys. . . . [E]ach specialization presents men and women with different emotional tasks (2012a, p. 163).

Hochschild also makes the point that 'the general subordination of women leaves every individual woman with a weaker 'status shield' against the displaced feelings of others' (2012, p. 163). Thus women, through their subordinated social status, are expected to and come to accept responsibility for managing others (particularly men's) emotions. Hochschild's (1997) conception of emotional labour applied only to the management of emotion within the workplace. She termed emotion regulation within the home and personal relationships, as well as emotional and mental work done in an effort to maintain relationships, emotion work. These ideas of emotion work in the home are echoed in research by Singleton and Maher (2005) and Riggs and Bartholomaeus (2018) in which female partners were implicitly held responsible for managing the emotion work within households.

Williams (2000, 2010) has also expanded upon research and theorisation about the implications of women performing emotional labour in the workplace, often drawing parallels to the invisible work women perform within the home. Extending this, the phrase 'office housework' was coined by Rosabeth Moss Kanter (1977) in her seminal

book *Men and Women of The Corporation*, in which she sought to conceptualise and make visible the often invisible work she noticed women doing within workplaces. Kanter wrote at length about the parallels between the type of invisible labour women did within the home and the similar type of work she saw women taking on in offices—things such as getting coffee, organising social events, and women being more likely to take notes at meetings.

Babcock and colleagues (2017) also reported that women are more likely to volunteer for 'non-promotable duties' that, they emphasise, have benefits for the organisation and help to keep things running smoothly but have little benefit for women. In a separate publication, Babcock and colleagues (2017) that managers (both male and female) were more likely to pick women than men to perform these tasks. This has the potential to have serious consequences for women's careers because if they are doing invisible and non-promotable work, in particular if they are doing more of it than men, it will take them longer to progress in their careers. However, as Heilman and Chen (2005) found, often when women do say no to 'office housework', they are viewed unfavourably and as selfish and unhelpful. This is in contrast to men who decline, who are simply viewed as too busy to assist.

According to Hochschild's (1997, 2012b) conception of emotional labour, women are more susceptible to feeling expected to undertake such work, as well as being subject to expectations that they will do it with no objections, requiring emotional regulation on their part. Kanter (1977) saw this as the kind of work that is essential to keeping workplaces running smoothly, but because it is invisible it goes unappreciated—as do the people who perform it. A culture shift encouraging men to step away from traditional ways of working may contribute to altering the current gender

dynamics which exist within workplaces and home environments, and which result in women performing what are seen as socially subordinate tasks.

2.5 Use of flexible work arrangements as a public health issue

Broadly, employees who are satisfied with their work-life balance are likely to be happier citizens, more engaged parents, and more productive workers (Craig & Mullan, 2010; Pocock, 2005a). In general, it is recognised that the use of flexible working arrangements can have many benefits to individual health. These benefits can include more time to focus on health and well-being, exercise, and reducing stress by engaging in enjoyable activities (Joyce et al., 2010; Pocock, 2005a). In a comprehensive review of flexible working arrangements, Joyce and colleagues (2010) found that where employees have more choice and control over their working patterns there are likely to be positive effects for their health and well-being, including on blood pressure, mental health, sleeping habits, and self-rated health status (see also Kelly et al., 2011; Shafer et al., 2018). Joyce and colleagues further suggested that more well-designed, qualitative, and longitudinal studies are required to further investigate the health effects of flexibility. However, the research to date indicates that the use of flexibility can be seen as a public health issue.

2.5.1 Family health and men's health

Men's ability to utilise flexible working arrangements can affect their health and well-being, as well as that of their children, partners, and other dependants. Evidence suggests that men's individual health and well-being, including mental health, is adversely affected by long working hours, and even by constant connection to paid work (Bittman, Brown, & Wajcman, 2009; Cooklin, Dinh, et al., 2016; Cortis & Powell, 2018; Joyce et al., 2010; Strazdins et al., 2016; Virtanen, Heikkila, et al., 2012; Virtanen,

Stansfeld, Fuhrer, Ferrie, & Kivimaki, 2012). A study by Shafer and colleagues (2018) included participants who worked at least 50 hours per week and compared them with others who worked a standard work week. They found that men who worked long hours self-reported higher levels of stress, work-life conflict, and lower relationship quality. Cortis and Powell (2018) also recently found that where middle managers regularly took work home to complete outside of their normal work hours, this was associated with higher workloads and perceptions of lower organisational support for work-life balance.

Further, in a study investigating the link between fathers' working conditions and mental health in the postnatal period, Cooklin and colleagues (2015) concluded that 'employment characteristics, via work-family conflict and work-family enrichment, are key determinants of fathers' postnatal mental health' (p. 214). The authors identified that long and inflexible work hours, and a lack of autonomy over work were associated with increased work-family conflict, and subsequently increased distress (see also Becher & Dollard, 2016; Bianchi & Milkie, 2010; Joyce et al., 2010; Milkie, Kendig, Nomaguchi, & Denny, 2010). One in three fathers in Cooklin and colleagues' study reported work-family conflict, highlighting the potential for increased distress amongst new fathers with these working conditions. The authors thus suggested that flexible working arrangements can provide protective working conditions for new fathers' mental health in the postnatal period.

Given the indication of extra stress and distress fathers may experience during the postnatal period, having the opportunity to use flexibility during these periods would assist fathers in addressing their physical and mental health and well-being, without the added stress of engagement in paid work. (This research suggests that there is a pressing

need for more research investigating the mental health of fathers during the postnatal period and how this interacts with paid work.)

In addition, men's uptake of flexible working arrangements gives them the opportunity to be more engaged fathers and to devote more time to developing an infant-father and/or child-father bond, which has been linked to positive health and developmental outcomes for children (Fletcher, May, St George, Stoker, & Oshan, 2014; Huerta et al., 2013). While a recent report conducted by Huerta and colleagues (2013) suggested that it is the quality and not the quantity of time fathers spend with children that matters, the availability of fathers to spend quality time with children is often dictated by the father's working hours and availability while children are also at home.

Halford (2006), for example, found that fathers reported an increase in the quality of interactions with their children when they were able to work from home. In Halford's study, most men described how not commuting on their days working from home left more time for family meals and activities. It also gave fathers the opportunity to be more involved in the day to day, routine activities of their children's lives because they were in closer proximity to them. One father noted that this allowed him to be there to provide incidental emotional support to his daughter. This increase in the quality of the father-child relationship was only possible through the utilisation of a flexible working arrangement. Ashbourne and colleagues' (2011) qualitative study with fathers suggested that responsiveness within the father-child relationship also provides fathers with the ability to develop a deeper understanding of themselves and their parenting skills and style. Spending more time with their children provides an important opportunity for fathers to further develop as parents.

Other research has generated evidence pointing to children having better health outcomes later in life, better learning abilities, and better development as a result of father involvement and engagement. For example, Fraser and colleagues (2011) found in their systematic review looking at predictors of child overweight and obesity that paternal parenting styles appear to have an influence on children in relation to weight gain. Though they did acknowledge methodological issues affecting comparability in the study, they recommended more focus on fathers in child obesity research, and child health research generally. Other researchers have suggested links between the increased amount of time children spent with fathers as well as higher levels of emotional support obtained from fathers, and lower levels of depression and delinquency in teenagers; higher levels of self-esteem and life satisfaction in adolescents; as well as level of educational ability and socio-emotional expression in younger children (see Allen & Daly, 2007; Amato & Rivera, 1999; Ashbourne et al., 2011; Duursma, 2014; Fletcher et al., 2014; Huerta et al., 2013; Marsiglio & Roy, 2012; Rönkä et al., 2017; Sarkadi, Kristiansson, Oberklaid, & Bremberg, 2008; Suizzo et al., 2017; WHO, 2007).

In Australia in one of the first studies to link child mental health with fathers' use of flexibility, Dinh and colleagues (2017) showed a connection between high work-life conflict for fathers and a decrease in child mental health. Irritable parenting was found to be a mediating factor. When fathers' work-life conflict decreased, such as when they were utilising flexible working arrangements, irritable parenting also decreased—and child mental health improved.

Further, more recent research has begun to investigate the connection between men's work-life conflict and the health and well-being of their female partners (see Hostetler, Desrochers, Kopko, & Moen, 2012). For example, Shafer and colleagues

(2018) found that some partner relationships were negatively affected where the male partner was working long hours. In addition, women have been found to be more likely (than men) to experience 'cross-over stress' when their partners experience stress (Levine, Bonner, & Klugman, 2014). Leach and Butterworth (2012) also found a link between psychosocial stressors at work and poorer quality spousal relationships, due to lower positive support from spouses (see also Craig & Brown, 2017; Levine et al., 2014; Schulz, Cowan, Pape Cowan, & Brennan, 2004; Story & Repetti, 2006; Wang & Repetti, 2014). Further, Kelly and colleagues (2011) found that schedule control, and flexibility, was an important factor in reducing relationship conflicts and stressors (see also Gerstel & Clawson, 2018).

Though much remains to be done in investigating the relationship between men's working behaviours and the health of both them and the family unit, the early and initial findings provide an indication that men's level of preoccupation with paid work can have an influence on their own and the health and well-being of the family unit as a whole.

2.6 Benefits to organisations

Although this research focuses primarily on factors influencing and resulting from individuals' use of workplace flexibility, it must also be acknowledged that organisations benefit from the use of flexible working arrangements as well. In fact, more organisations are promoting the use of flexibility to improve their company image, to attract and retain talented employees, and to try to improve the well-being of and gender imbalances among employees.

It may well be thought that employees working longer hours, and being dedicated to paid work with no outside distractions, might benefit employers because of

the extra work carried out in those hours. However, there is an established inverse correlation between longer working hours and productivity (Golden, 2012). For every extra hour an employee works in a standard workday, productive output reduces. As discussed, there are also health risks and costs to overwork, and health costs associated with the stress of work-family conflict, which may result in negative impacts on employers with time off and less productive hours spent at work (Golden, 2012; Skinner et al., 2014). Factors such as perceptions that long work hours lead to promotions and cultures of presenteeism can affect the likelihood of employees working extra hours (see, for example, Michielsens et al., 2013).

In research conducted by Ladge and colleagues (2015), their quantitative results suggested that benefits of involved fathering to organizations included fathers having a positive association with job satisfaction, commitment to work and lower intentions to leave. However, they found that a stronger fathering identity was associated with a weaker work identity. While the authors suggest that this points to a fading of the ideal worker norm, I suggest that this may point to some fathers 'opting out' (Stone, 2008). In this case, the ideal worker norm remains a strong influencer for other fathers. Managerial support, though, was found to potentially moderate this negative association, possibly suggestion that when men feel supported in their roles as involved fathers, they will also maintain a strong work identity.

Taking a societal level approach, Ladge and colleagues (2015) suggested that '[i]nvolved fathering may also have indirect benefits for organizations because more time spent with children is beneficial for family well-being, which in turn may build human capital for the future labour force' (p. 165). Pocock (2005a) also argued that there is a social, political and personal case for work-life balance for employees, their partners,

children and other dependants; thus there are implications for social outcomes, personal well-being, family well-being, commitment to job and organisation, and productivity (Alkahtani, 2015; Craig & Mullan, 2010; Williams, 2010). Increasing health and well-being and work productivity also increases social well-being, increasing the likelihood of social and community connections, and has the flow-on effect of decreasing expenditure on health (Pocock, 2005a; Williams, 2010). Poor work-life balance can result in negative physical and mental health effects, lesser work contribution and community participation and poorer outcomes for dependants—which in turn puts pressure on other institutions within the community and wider society.

The benefits of ensuring a positive work-life balance for employees thus has many flow-on effects for both men and women. Craig and Brown noted that 'shorter work weeks are important to whole-family well-being, as well as less stressful to workers themselves' (2019, p. 239). However, given that it is men who are more likely to be engaged in full-time work in Australia and less likely to use flexible working arrangements (than women), the need to explore how men's use of flexible work arrangements can be increased is an important social issue.

2.7 Summary

Given the literature covered in this chapter, it seems clear that men's use of flexible working arrangements is an important phenomenon to investigate. Men's use of workplace flexibility has the potential to have far-reaching effects, not just on men themselves, but on women, children, the family unit as a whole, and society in general. Further, men's use of flexibility has the potential to provide an enactment of 'undoing gender' within workplaces, to challenge norms regarding men's and women's roles within workplaces and within homes, and to facilitate equality at home and in

workplaces. In order to do all these things, attention needs to be directed to the links between masculinity, fathering, and paid work, how and why they remain strong, and ways in which they may be challenged and evolve.

Chapter 3: Theoretical Orientation

In this chapter I will introduce the theoretical orientation of this research, as drawing upon theories strengthens research focus and analysis (Reeves, Albert, Kuper, & Hodges, 2008). This project incorporates ideas from a number of different theoretical perspectives, each of which provide an important lens for the research topic and aims, namely to investigate barriers and facilitators to men's uptake of flexible working arrangements. In aiming to investigate potential barriers and facilitators of men's uptake of flexibility, and gendered influences on men's decision making, epistemologically this research took a constructionist approach. A number of critical theoretical perspectives and concepts within the constructionist epistemology were employed and guided the choice of methods for the project. These (often overlapping) perspectives and concepts include: critical social constructionism, gendered organisational theory, the ideal worker norm, masculinity theory and feminist theory. These perspectives are broadly concerned with questions of power and how gender comes to be constructed. A background to these theories will be provided in this chapter, as well as a short discussion of why these are useful in answering questions related to men's use of flexible work arrangements. These theoretical frameworks then guided the methodological approach to data collection and analysis, to be discussed in Chapter 4.

3.1 Choosing an appropriate theoretical framework

In choosing an appropriate theoretical approach and methodology, consideration was given to the suggestion that '[f]orms of explanation or theories, and their accompanying methodologies and methods, are recognized as key contributors to the stabilization of selected realities' (Bacchi & Rönnblom, 2014 p. 171). Hoel (2015) also noted that, particularly when researching with identities or categories, there is a risk that

the very difference being studied may be reproduced through that research. I am aware that within this research project certain aspects of the issue in question, and, by implication, aspects of this issue not being explored, may be problematised. However, by employing a critical perspective which highlights and questions how categories of gender and associated masculine and feminine gender expectations can come to be accepted as normal and natural, this research explores how challenge, resistance, and change in relation to gender is possible. It is only through this kind of approach that the taken-for-granted practices and processes, actions and interactions within organisations, and institutions more broadly, can be contextualised and questioned.

3.1.1 Looking at categories

This research investigates gender as a relational identity, such that gender is viewed as constructed and constituted through social action, interaction, and knowledges (Connell, 2005a; Schippers, 2007). This approach to gender sees it as able to change, as an unfixed entity in so far as the cultural setting of a society can (re)construct the meaning of gender within that society. However, gender within this research is discussed primarily as a categorical, male/female dichotomy. As mentioned, there is a risk when researching and discussing gender in this way that the very difference being studied may be reproduced through that research. For example, discussing gender primarily as a male/female dichotomy can work to erase other gender identities, such as transgender and non-binary. Crenshaw (1991) also noted that often when people are categorised, as opposed to identifying as belonging to a category themselves, they are 'othered' or identified as different through their categorisation. Crenshaw (1991) noted that this othering or differing is relational, as people are defined and categorised in relation to others—often those with the power to define. Within the organisational context, it is

often women, and men who deviate from organisational (and gendered) expectations, who are 'othered' (Ahmed, 2007a, 2015; Cockburn, 1991; Ely & Padavic, 2007; Lee, 2018; Padavic, Ely, & Reid, 2019).

Cockburn (1998) suggested that identity should be theorised as 'social and relational, complex, always in process, taking shape in discourse' (p. 11); as will be explored throughout this thesis, it is often those in positions of relative power that have the ability to shape and (re)produce identities and discourse, creating and facilitating oppressive conditions (see also Fairclough, 1992). The inherently masculine nature of workplaces often means that it is men who have the power to define the 'other', and men who conform to organisational expectations benefit from this 'othering'. So, 'to say that a category such as race or gender is socially constructed is not to say that the category has no significance in the world . . . the way power has clustered around certain categories and is exercised against others [is important to recognise]' (Crenshaw, 1991, pp. 1296-1297). Bacchi and Eveline (2009) further wrote that:

> claims to identity are political rather than essentialist in character. You simply have to recognise that politically there are times when it is more useful and appropriate to challenge constructed identities and that at other times it is necessary to challenge the practices of . . . oppression, which will involve working through and with categories (p. 10).

So, the approach of the current research recognises that gender is fluid and not a categorical identity for some, and that while it can and does evolve, it remains for the most part constrained by a broader dualistic categorisation which must be examined in order to question and deconstruct the power associated with it. With this in mind, this research is concerned with the power that men have in society and within organisations,

and the ways in which men both benefit from and are inhibited by gendered organisational contexts.

3.1.2 Reflexivity in choosing a theoretical approach

Following from the above, I want to acknowledge that in this research, certain positions are being privileged and there are political and methodological implications which flow from this privileging. The approach taken here, while it acknowledges the potential for knowledge, and gender specifically, to be fluid and to evolve through action and interaction, is in its own way essentialist and affirmative of the legitimacy of this structure of knowledge and of gender (Beasley, 1999; Hoel, 2015; Schippers, 2007). Bacchi (2017) also suggested that the continual use of categorical distinctions of 'man' and 'woman', and of male and female, contributes to the maintenance of inequality—inequality is done through this positioning. As mentioned above, these concepts must be studied as they are commonly understood and constructed; however, this approach thereby has the potential to essentialise masculinity and femininity and an overarching view of them as static categories.

Epistemologically, any approach that a researcher takes posits that that approach is the true or correct one to take on a particular issue (Hoel, 2015). That is, I am acknowledging my bias in the theoretical and methodological preference presented here; 'bias' is unavoidable. Nonetheless, if it is accepted that no single approach is the most legitimate for an issue or topic, then as Hammersley (1992) noted, all accounts have some legitimacy and deserve consideration.

On a concrete level this theorising may appear inconsequential to the everyday lives of participants. The approaches I have selected here and used to shape analyses and

discussion (and hopefully contribute to progression of gender equity), are primarily macro-level theories and cannot fully capture the necessities of everyday action. For the individual father working within an organisation who is in the process of deciding whether to use flexibility, the theorisations presented here may not directly assist in managing the consequences of his decision. I recognise here that in the everyday scheme of men's lives a macro-level focus has the potential to demand change on their parts without full acknowledgement of the far-removed nature of this theorisation from their individual lives. However, at the same time I do not want to excuse inaction or continued complicity with hegemonic masculinity which results from these everyday decisions (see, for example Ashley, 2011; Lamont, 2015 for discussion of complicit masculinity and how it maintains gendered power structures); as Pease (2015a) suggested, men and their inherent power within the current gender structure cannot be pandered to if progress is to be made (see also Flood, 2019). Rather, and as will be explored further in Chapter 9, recognition of the difficulty of these decisions and actions provides somewhat of an explanation for the slow progress being made in relation to gender equality, and what action might provide a way forward.

3.2 Constructionist Epistemology

This project is guided by a constructionist epistemology. Epistemology, or the particular stance a researcher takes in relation to knowledge, constitutes the researcher's view and understanding of the object of research, and thus the approaches used to explore and analyse (Crotty, 1998). A constructionist epistemology posits that knowledge is socially constructed, but is dependent upon a relationship between individuals and their social realities, in which individuals create and reproduce meaning and knowledge through social practice. Dominant knowledges or ideologies come to be so, and accepted as natural, through their (re)production through individual action and

interaction (Crotty, 1998). Potter (1996) suggested that negotiation is an important aspect of meaning making in constructionism. He argues that meaning does not come to be through individual action or talk, but through ongoing action and interaction whereby the meaning of something comes to be understood and shared among multiple individuals. Knowledge and reality are thus capable of change as they are constituted, and reconstituted, by shared interaction and meaning making.

A constructionist epistemology incorporates the idea that individuals are capable of observing the world and deciding on a course of action—that they are able to think about and evaluate what the best course of action is for them (Gergen, 1999). However, constructionism emphasises the restricted nature of individual choices based upon the discourses and positionings seen as acceptable within a particular cultural and social setting. Thus, while individuals have agency within constructionism, how they constitute and construct knowledge, and the action they take, is restricted (Crotty, 1998).

Further, constructionism sits within a critical tradition; critical theories have, as a focus, the critique of society and its constitution, and the aim of changing society as a whole (Gergen, 1999). Critical theorists thus have a core interest in issues of equity and justice, and particularly concerned with issues which may involve the oppression or subjugation of particular groups, through the (re)production and maintenance of power. The 'construction of knowledge and the organisation of power in society generally, and in institutions such as schools, hospitals, and government specifically' (Reeves et al., 2008, p. 633) receive great attention from critical theorists because the study of this can illuminate how oppression and subjugation comes to be and is maintained. In this research project, I apply a critical approach to facilitate examination of how gender

expectations in relation to work and parenting come to be and are maintained, and how these could possibly be challenged.

3.3 Social Constructionism

Berger and Luckman (1991) were influential in the development of social constructionism. They suggested that knowledge, or what passes for knowledge, in a society should be a focus of study for researchers. Knowledge is constructed by and through a range of different social practices, interactions, and language, and comes to be known as Truth. Thus, constructionists view reality as created, or constructed, rather than discovered, and are concerned with how (or the processes by which) knowledge is created (Andrews, 2012; Burr, 2003). There may be an objective reality according to the social constructionist perspective; however, as reality is subjectively constructed it may correspond to some objective truth but remain the subjective construction of the social setting and individual interpretation (Burr, 2003). Hammersley (1992), for example, argues that an independent reality exists but that individuals cannot directly access that reality, only interpretations of it.

This approach thus assumes that individuals can make their own meanings but these will be influenced by a socially/culturally agreed upon meaning achieved through language (Crotty, 1998; Potter, 1996). These agreements are reached 'through the interaction of people with the social world, with this social world in turn influencing people resulting in routinisation and habitualization' (Andrews, 2012, p. 40; see also Berger & Luckman, 1991). Meanings come to be reproduced and institutionalised, such that they appear to be objective truths and are 'taken-for-granted'. These meanings, and their status as objective truths, then come to be reified (Potter, 1996) through interactions with others.

Thus, examining the language used by men around the issues in this project is a way to see how and upon what shared meanings their identities are constructed. Burr (1995) suggested that personal identity is also attained from the social space. Individuals learn from their society what and who they are supposed to be, and that social conventions and expectations must be followed in order to have their identities validated. Similarly, Butler (1990) emphasises the idea that gender is performed or 'done', based upon available gendered discourses and what is seen as acceptable (see also West & Zimmerman, 1987, 2009). Both Burr (1995) and Berger and Luckman (1991) see language as a significant way through which subjective reality is constructed, reconstructed, and maintained. Gergen (1999) also discussed the importance of language and discourse in the (re)production of ideas and knowledge, stating 'if rhetoric is the art of persuasion, then the study of rhetoric is the illumination of power in action . . . the language of objective reality is essentially used as a means of generating hierarchies of inclusion and exclusion' (p. 73). Gergen (1999) explained that those who do not agree with, or question, the 'taken-for-granted' truth that is constructed and made dominant through language (and interaction), are considered 'irrational' or 'unrealistic'—in this way groups who question constructed reality are excluded. He emphasised, in this way, the power that language—and agreed upon meanings—has to facilitate and maintain a reality or truth as objective. From this conceptualisation it can also be seen that many constructed realities may exist, but power structures are likely to determine which is seen as the accepted, dominant, or objective reality (Burr, 2003; Wetherell & Edley, 1999). These ideas are pertinent to the topic being investigated because it investigates taken-for-granted notions of gender and gendered expectations of men and women.

Social Constructionism could be argued to be a critical theory because it sees truth and reality as constructed by social practices, not objective knowledge or thought.

It questions how knowledge comes to be and the power relations which maintain the status quo (Burr, 2003). Social constructionism can thus be seen as a crucial framework to apply to the current research due to the inherent power relations at play, and the potential for objective truths to be reified through interaction when investigating masculinity, organisations, and parenting.

3.4 Gendered Organisational Theory

Joan Acker (1990) suggested that organisational theories have tended to overlook the importance of gender in the processes and practices that organisations employ in their day to day operations. Her theory of gendered organisations (1990, 1992a, 1992b) suggested that gender is the most pervasive concept affecting organisational structure and processes, and the actions of those within the organisation itself. She suggested that, though organisations present themselves to be gender neutral, gendered processes and practices exist within organisations, and have the effect of (re)producing dominant discourses and knowledges around gendered behaviour and expectations. These gendered practices may be overt, such as selecting only men or women for certain jobs, or hidden in decisions that appear to be gender neutral. The operation of these kinds of practices within organisations contributes to and reproduces ideas around the separation of work and home/family life, and assumptions regarding men's and women's commitment to their organisation and their ability to be productive (see also Burton, 1987; Cooper, 2000; Stone, 2008; Williams, 2010).

A key concept of Acker's theory is related to the underlying processes within organisations which (re)produce these gendered assumptions around the public and private spheres. She suggested that organisations present the concept of 'job' as gender neutral and the worker as disembodied, and that this veils the actuality of those concepts

as masculine because the demands of a job usually require a person who is unencumbered, typically understood to be a man (Acker, 1990). The valuation of masculine traits in a worker gives rise to the notion of the ideal worker (see below) as masculine and paid work as therefore expressly related to masculine identity (see also Acker, 2012). In Australia, social policy has tended to reflect this idea (see, for example, Brennan, 2011; Connell, 2005b; Dreyfus, 2013), providing an illustration of what Bacchi and Eveline (2010) described as policy representation reinforcing the gender categories—therefore undermining any conceptualisation of those categories and the associated gender roles as problematic. Extending the theoretical perspective of organisations as gendered, Ely and Meyerson (2000a, 2010) also suggested that organisational policies equate masculinity with the ideal worker and that a consideration of gender when trying to promote organisational change is therefore essential. They emphasised that men are also disadvantaged through the (re)production of gendered norms in workplaces, providing an extension of Acker's focus on the disadvantages women alone faced through the production and reproduction of gendered practices and assumptions within organisations.

More recently, researchers have expanded upon the ideas presented by Acker, incorporating these into research on and in organisations. Importantly, Ely and Padavic (2007) reiterated Acker's (1990) original assertions when they found that research on and in organisations tended not to incorporate ideas of gender as a social system (see also Fox, 2017; Hearn, 2014c). They suggested that a greater focus on gender within the organisational context was required in the field of organisational studies. Further, Ely and Meyerson (2000a; 2000b; 2010) suggested that organisational practices and policies encouraged men and women to behave in certain ways within workplaces, and particularly encouraged performances of masculinity which were physically dangerous

(Ely & Meyerson, 2010). As mentioned previously, Ely and Kimmel (2018) also recently proposed that men are often compelled to demonstrate their manliness through performances of gender in the workplace. They suggest that the drive for this performative behaviour can be located in organisational norms and practices which encourage 'masculinity contests', which can be both restrictive and dangerous for men. Through the application of ideas around gender as an inherent and inextricable aspect of workplaces and work culture, the construction and constitution of workplaces processes which maintain gendered expectations and power relations in workplaces can be examined and explored.

3.5 The Ideal Worker Norm

The notion of the ideal worker was introduced by Acker (1990); she suggested that to be considered an ideal worker within an organisation, an employee must show dedication to work with no outside distractions—such as family. Historically, the ideal worker has been the male worker, because male workers have typically had wives at home to take care of children and other aspects of home life. Halford (2006) noted that there are now different discourses being employed in research around fatherhood, such as the 'involved' father, but that practically there is a gap between this discourse and those most often enacted by men. The discourse of being a good father is generally constituted by having a job and financially providing for your family, and this can be seen to, at its core, continue to emphasise the identity of father as worker (Baxter & Hewitt, 2013; Coltrane, 1996; Coltrane et al. 2013; Cooper, 2000). The discourse of father as worker and mother as carer has had a large impact on the construction of fathering identity and is evident in wider society and culture—particularly in Australia, as was discussed in Chapter 2. This constitutes the idea of what a worker should be and highlights the gendered expectation that men should be dedicated to paid work and not

be concerned with family commitments (see Williams, 2000; 2010). Kmec and colleagues (2014) noted the continuing pervasiveness of the ideal worker norm, particularly as a factor in men's decisions around uptake of flexible leave policies, which I will explore in Chapter 5.

When discussing the ideal worker, a discussion of sexuality is also important as dominant, heterosexual norms and discourses regarding reproduction and paid work underpin the ideal worker norm. Within this theory, reproduction and sexuality are resources for control. A woman's sexuality, as it is tied to reproduction through the visibility of pregnancy, is especially vulnerable to control—and it has the potential to interrupt work processes and productivity (see Lee, 2018 for a discussion of pregnant bodies and breastfeeding in work spaces). Men's (hetero)sexuality, on the other hand, is used to reinforce their organisational power and belonging (Acker, 1990; 1992a); as Hearn (2014d) noted, '[a] continuing theme has been how many organizations and managements embrace dominant heterosexual ideologies and practices, for example, some male managers' reliance on wives' (p. 401).

Ely and Meyerson (2010) suggested that the privilege given to production over work-life balance needed to be challenged and this was recently echoed by Correll and colleagues (2014), when they discussed the need to challenge the notion of the ideal worker in pursuit of more equitable access to flexible leave policies for men. This desire to implement a more equitable view of flexible leave use has also been found in the Australian community. In a recent report, van der Gaag and colleagues (2019) suggested that changing attitudes in relation to parenting and the value of unpaid work is necessary to achieve long term gender equality (see also Huerta et al., 2013; Pocock et al, 2013; Sanders et al., 2016). They suggested that an important component is breaking down the

long-held view of the traditional division of labour that sees child rearing as a female task and responsibility—and conversely, sees organisations and paid work as a masculine domain. Kelly and colleagues (2010) and Sallee (2012, 2013) have since noted that workplace structures and expectations such as the ideal worker norm limit men's and women's choices in managing family responsibilities—and there is a need to challenge these expectations to make men's use of flexible work more acceptable (see also Brumley, 2014; Coltrane et al., 2013; Davies & Frink, 2014; Dumas & Sanchez-Burks, 2015; Reid, 2015). Consideration of the theoretical and practical facets of the ideal worker norm thus represent an important aspect of the issue of men's utilisation of flexible working arrangements, highlighting the importance of exploring how men experience and construct their identities in relation to paid work.

3.6 Masculinity Theory

Connell (2014d) suggested that masculinities are important to research because 'gender is one of the main structures of the human world; because gender inequalities are fundamental issues of social justice' (p. 5). Further, as Hearn (1996) stated, analyses of men are necessary in order to 'deconstruct the dominant'. This is not to prioritise or privilege men's experiences; rather to acknowledge that focus on them and on masculine identity and its construction is necessary in order to understand and challenge gendered expectations. One of the most important theoretical developments in the field of masculinity studies was Connell's (1987, 2005a) theory of hegemonic masculinity. This theory has a focus on masculinity as something that can be performed and emphasises that action can be seen as either masculine or feminine, and proposes the conception of a dominant, or hegemonic, form of masculinity. Other forms of masculinity, and also femininity, are considered subordinate to hegemonic masculinity. The concept of hegemonic masculinity proposes that even though few men actually meet the ideal of

hegemonic masculinity, they are inclined to support it because all men benefit from the structural subordination of women, and their dominant position within the patriarchy—which Connell termed a 'patriarchal dividend' (2005a, p. 82). Thus, even if men do not achieve hegemonic masculinity, they remain complicit with it and continue to benefit.

This conception of hegemonic masculinity was later critiqued by Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) who suggested that multiple forms of masculinity were possible, and that agents had the power through action to challenge social macro-structures but were, nonetheless, constrained by the patterns of power acting in a society or culture. Within these theorisations, the conceptualisations of power relations and dominance of the category of men over women was undoubtedly an important development, although it has been observed that this 'tends to stabilize gender identities/masculinities as plural yet largely homogenous groupings' (Beasley, 2012, p. 755). Schippers (2007), for example, wrote about the need to consider hegemonic femininities as well as hegemonic masculinities, such that femininity should be considered as its own construct rather than exclusively in relation to masculinity where femininity/women will primarily be considered subordinate. Coles (2009) also provided a critique of the concept of hegemonic masculinity, by suggesting that masculinity can be thought of as existing in 'fields'. Coles generated the theoretical concept of a 'field of masculinity' within which various subfields exist to explain the variety of dominant masculinities that might exist at any one time. Accordingly, in the concept of a field of masculinity, some men's lived realities may not engage with ideals of hegemonic masculinity; they may reject hegemonic masculinity but in their own social contexts their masculinity may still be dominant to that enacted by other men

Similarly, recent theorisations have proposed that gender can be constructed and enacted outside of the male/female gender binary, and research is tending towards the multiple, complex and intersecting forms of masculinity within a postmodernist perspective (see Beasley, 2012, 2013; Budgeon, 2014; Schippers, 2007). These theorisations highlight that the idea that the subordination of femininity and other forms of masculinity to hegemonic masculinity, and indeed the privileging of a hegemonic form of masculinity in itself, need to be questioned in order for the current gender structure to be challenged (Genz, 2009). As Beasley (2012) noted:

> [w]hile postmodern interest in 'undoing' gender does not require the abandonment of gender categories as sites of analysis, it does require a reconfiguring of them such that these identities are rendered permanently open and contestable…[T]his attention to unravelling identity categories involves destabilizing understandings of gender as largely homogeneous groupings (p. 759).

As discussed, in the present research I see the value in conceptualising and challenging gender categories in this way, as requiring a destabilisation of categories and understandings of gender as homogenous in order for gender, and structural power, to be challenged. However, I also see the concept of hegemonic masculinity, though in some ways problematic, as offering a way to conceptualise dominant discourses around men, work and care-taking responsibilities. By Connell's own admission, hegemonic masculinity in its originally proposed conceptualistion (see Connell, 1987; 2005a; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005) was perhaps too rigid to allow for the 'undoing' of gendered structures, and the distinct lack of consideration of the potential for femininity to be dominant. The application of the concept here will seek to incorporate ideas of structural power but also the necessity of breaking down rigid gender conceptualisations

to aid in progression to equity. The concept and application of hegemonic masculinity, how gender and meaning are seen as being constituted and performed, also fits well within the constructionist epistemology I have adopted here and allows for critical consideration of the inherent power structures shaping gendered relations and expectations.

Further, Howson (2014) suggested that hegemonic masculinity continues to represent an important conceptualisation of the workings of the gender order. He wrote that:

> [i]n the formulation of hegemonic masculinity as normative we see it become and operate as a particular component of good sense because ultimately its task is to build a 'sense' of unity within a gender order. If we can accept that hegemonic masculinity is a characteristic of some hegemony and further, that as such its aim is unification then it must engage the national popular collective will of men and women and men and women equally must engage it (2014, p. 23).

If, as Howson (2014) and other researchers in this field have suggested, men and women must equally engage this conceptualisation of masculinity and the gender order, then in order to work towards gender equity we must first encourage the development of a masculinity that does not see itself as imbuing men with a superiority over women. To achieve this, it is necessary to understand the workings of masculinity and its power—thus it must be studied in this hegemonic form.

Accordingly, some researchers suggest that one of the keys to questioning and changing the discourses around gender roles lies with men themselves and the choices they make around enactment of their masculine identities. In Finn and Henwood's

(2009) study, for example, their male participants expressed a desire to become more involved, more hands-on fathers. The authors suggested that this indicated the ability of men to question and interrupt common or dominant discourses of gender in relation to parenting. How this occurs, however, and whether there is a gap between expression and enactment of masculinity, is important to consider. In the research presented in the coming chapters, a focus on masculinity and on how men negotiate their masculine identities in relation to the utilisation of flexible working arrangements will allow an exploration of how challenges and resistance to dominant ideas of masculine identity are formed and carried out, and how accepted forms of masculinity and masculine identity are maintained. If individuals are able to resist privileged discourses within organisations and the institutionalised processes and practices which (re)produce gendered assumptions through their enactments of gender, exploring this has important implications for men in the workplace and those who want to be more engaged fathers.

3.7 Feminist Theory

Howson and colleagues (2013) noted that studies of men and masculinity have been, and continue to be, influenced heavily by feminist theory and feminist methods. Of particular standing in this research, feminist theorists such as Bacchi and Rönnblom (2014) emphasised the importance of considering the individual as constituted by practices, and as constantly performing their gender often in accordance with dominant or powerful discourses. In particular, Bacchi and Rönnblom (2014), in their discussion of the (re)production of knowledge systems, cited a Foucauldian approach to knowledge production—that is, that the 'taken-for-granted' needs to be questioned. Foucault's conceptualisation of power relations and systems of knowledge are applicable for their focus on questioning how and why certain knowledges come to be formed; thus Foucault's ideas have had a large influence on feminist theorisation (see Hearn, 2004).

Foucault (1972, 1982) theorised that individuals come to see themselves in certain ways as a result of the available subject positions in their culture or society, which are made available by certain powerful knowledges. Foucault suggested that power is shaping; it produces for individuals possibilities for being. For Foucault, subjects take up the positions available to them in discourses. This approach is also elucidated by Edley (2001) and Wetherell, Stiven, and Potter (1987). Indeed, in Wetherell and colleagues' (1987) study, their respondents suggested that there were biological, natural reasons why women were not hired as much as men—the discourse they took up pointed to women's provision of childcare as natural and normal and not something for which men possessed capacity. However, in work conducted by Edley and Wetherell (1999), young male participants discussed how they would manage family life if both the mother and father wanted to keep working. That this was even being discussed and considered as a possible option for these participants, the authors noted, indicated that there had been an ideological shift within society, making a different discourse available for them. Feminist theories have a focus on the need to investigate how knowledges such as this come to be formed, challenged, and how women's positionality within societies and cultures is affected (Grbich, 2013).

The importance of positionality can particularly be seen in relation to men and the discourses made available to them around work, family and caregiving. However, as Foucault (1982) theorised, 'things' do not just exist; 'conceptualizing reality as enacted, or practised, opens up a space for resistance. If 'things' are not natural, if they depend on being "done", this requires repetition of practices, producing room to manoeuvre and/or intervene' (Bacchi & Rönnblom, 2014 pp. 179-179). Feminist theories problematise knowledge claims, seek to illuminate how dominant discourses can come to be (re)produced, and explore how these may contribute to the gendered power

structures which continue to oppress women (Cott, 1997; Hochschild, 1997; Williams, 2000). As Creswell (2007, p. 26) states, '[t]he questions feminists pose relate to the centrality of gender in the shaping of our consciousness'.

While feminist approaches are similar to masculinity theory in their desire to question the taken-for-granted and gendered power, feminist approaches are primarily concerned with the positioning of and consequences for women as a result of gendered structures and institutions. Looking at gender through both these theoretical lenses provides a complimentary, complex, and holistic approach to gendered issues. The application of feminist theories and ideas which question how things come to be formed and normalised in certain ways, and how these may be challenged, is thus appropriate for this research.

3.8 Summary

In this chapter I have introduced the theoretical approach taken in this research, a constructionist epistemology, applying critical theoretical perspectives which have an interest in examining and questioning taken-for-granted notions around gender, work, and parenting. This approach allows a focus on how meaning is constructed, understood, and (re)produced through action, interaction, and language, as well as taking into account the broader social and cultural influences on individuals and institutions. This approach is a valuable and illuminating one when focusing on the interactions between individuals and institutions such as workplaces, and society and culture more broadly. There is not a great deal of research which incorporates a combination of these perspectives when applying a lens to the issue of men's use of flexible work arrangements, but each brings a specific and important perspective and demonstrates the necessity of using these different theoretical lenses.

Having discussed the theoretical approach informing this research, in Chapter 4, I will provide an outline and discussion of the methodological approach used in this research, the basis for the chosen approach, and some reflections on what this approach means and does in the context of this research.

Chapter 4: Rationale for and Reflections on

Methodological and Analytical Approach

In this chapter I will introduce the methodological and analytical approach used to explore men's uptake of flexible working arrangements in this research. The research aims to analyse individual and organisational barriers and facilitators to men's use of flexibility, particularly focusing on gendered components such as masculinity and fathering identity. Two separate studies were conducted to achieve this: the first focused on interviews with working fathers; the second focused on interviews with senior managers within organisations.

As discussed in Chapter 3, epistemologically this research took a constructionist approach. Numerous theoretical perspectives within this approach influenced the choice of methodology and shaped the collection and analysis of data. Details of the specific methods for each study will be presented in the relevant analytic chapter, so the aim here is to address general points about the methodological approach to the research as a whole.

4.1 Critical Approaches

In Chapter 3, the importance of critical research approaches (that is, approaches that question the taken-for-granted) was discussed. In general, it is important for a researcher to consider 'what options communicators use, why they use them and what the consequences of these choices are' (Machin & Mayr, 2012, p. 15). That is, researchers need to consider the consequences of how they do and do not represent an issue methodologically; they are, in this sense, complicit in how the issue is seen and represented, or how it is constructed for consumption by an audience.

I acknowledge that taking a critical approach to the research presented in this thesis frames the ways in which the audience can view the research, frames the collection of data and analysis in a certain way, and makes a choice about the best way to represent preferred interpretations and possible actions in this space. Specifically, the approach taken in this research highlights the need to critically consider the implicit assumptions in and consequences of our understandings of men's workplace flexibility.

4.1.1 Feminist methods and masculinity studies

In Chapter 6, which explores and analyses men's constructions of parenting, I draw upon the ideas raised by Locke and Yarwood (2017) and Dolan and Coe (2011) that men's voices are often absent in research about parenting and parenting experiences (see also Yarwood & Locke, 2016). To redress this, I chose a methodology that would emphasise the voices of the participants, while allowing a critical analytic framework to be applied to the data. Thus, this research draws heavily on gender theory and methods, specifically within feminist methodology and masculinity studies.

Feminist methodology was drawn upon in this research in part because it emphasises the importance of the co-creation of meaning and the need to give voice to participants (Landman, 2006). It is informed by feminist epistemology which asks who can be agents of knowledge, what can be known, and how knowledge is validated. Based upon her experiences of working and researching with women, Oakley (1981) in particular argues for reciprocity between the researcher and the researched in the qualitative research interview. Feminist methodology is particularly concerned with the implications of the exclusion of women's knowledge, and 'specifically concerned with how, or whether, knowledge produced about social life can be connected with the social realities of women in the context of any methodology that is dominated by men and that

neglects consideration of the gendered nature of social life' (Landman, 2006, p. 430). One of the difficult things I attempted to do in this research was to both respect the accounts given by the male participants of this research and also to critically analyse the nature and consequences of those accounts from a feminist perspective. It was considered important to bring balance and consideration to the implications of the accounts these men gave, but also to consider the implications for women's positions and gender inequality more broadly. Feminist methodology facilitated this approach (see Grbich, 2013).

In Chapter 6 I also point to the ideas presented by Chowdhury (2017) and Robb (2004), namely, that masculine identity can be shored up and its legitimacy confirmed within the interview space. These ideas also supported taking a critical perspective regarding the descriptions provided by the male participants of this research. Ultimately, adherence to rigorous methods of data collection and analysis provides a solid framework for consideration of both the experiences described by participants and the broader social and cultural meanings and implications of the accounts given by them (see also Edley, 2001; Wetherell & Edley, 2014).

4.2 Collection of data—interviewing

Data for this research were collected through semi-structured interviews with participants. Being conducted within a constructionist theoretical framework, the interviews themselves were considered to be as interactive and productive in their nature. This conceptualisation of research interviews is in contrast to that held within a positivist framework, where the answers given by participants are thought of as 'real' or 'true' in an objective sense. I took the approach that both myself as the interviewer and the participants had influence over the final meaning produced within the interview, and

we worked together to construct that meaning (King & Horrocks, 2010; Liamputtong, 2013).

I nonetheless expected that participants would respond to questions in their own words (Braun & Clarke, 2013). I avoided asking questions which might implicitly or explicitly challenge or make the participant feel judged, which potentially could lead to them not wanting to disclose their experiences to me (Kvale & Brinkman, 2015). Equally, consideration was given to the idea that researchers do not necessarily need to agree with their participants in order to build trust and rapport, and, in this vein, I attempted to show non-judgemental interest in what my participants were saying (Braun & Clarke, 2013).

Due to the open-ended nature of the questions, the interviews often proceeded in directions that I had not anticipated, but this gave a depth and breadth of information that may not have otherwise transpired and which proved fruitful for the overall research (see Braun & Clarke, 2013; King & Horrocks, 2010). All these possible issues were considered when developing the semi-structured interview questions for the two studies conducted as part of this research (see Appendix A and B for participant information sheets and interview schedules). Thus, in preparing the interview questions and conducting interviews, Braun and Clarke's (2013) suggestion that 'the ideal qualitative interview is flexible and responsive to the participant' and that 'good interviewers follow up on unanticipated issues and ask spontaneous and unplanned questions' (p. 79) shaped my approach.

Two sets of interviews were undertaken—one with working fathers (presented in Chapters 5-7) (see Appendix C for participant table) and one with both male and female senior managers within organisations (presented in Chapter 8) (see appendix D

for participant table). The interviews conducted with working fathers were audio recorded, with the participants' consent, and then transcribed (which will be discussed below). The interviews conducted with senior managers were not audio recorded, as it was considered that their senior positions may have made them less amenable to speaking openly about their organisations and their own views while being audio recorded; not audio-recording the interviews arguably enabled more open and informal discussion. These interviews were instead recorded with hand-written notes by two separate researchers (myself and one of my supervisors), and the notes then compared for accuracy (presented in Chapter 8). After carrying out the interviews and reflecting upon the experience and process, these managers would likely have been open to being audio recorded. Audio recording the interviews would have allowed for a more in-depth exploration and analysis of the managers' positions and speech.

4.2.1 Ethical considerations when interviewing

As with all qualitative research, ensuring that participants' identities remained protected was of the utmost importance in this research. Accordingly, any identifying information such as names of participants, institutions, work places, and positions were altered where this might have compromised confidentiality (Kvale & Brinkman, 2015; Liamputtong, 2013; McLellan, MacQueen, & Neidig, 2003). Participants were also reminded before commencement of the interviews that they would be recorded (either audio or manually recorded), but that information would be kept confidential.

Treating both the participants and the data obtained with respect is also an important ethical consideration in any qualitative research, and care was taken to consider this need. In particular, Braun and Clarke (2013) noted that the researcher tends to have more control over the data that are produced through an interview, and this works

in the favour of the researcher because they are able to produce more useful data for their projects. In part, choosing semi-structured interviews for this project acted as a counter for this because it gave participants the ability to direct the conversation somewhat. I hope this approach assisted participants to feel more empowered in the process, because they gave their time and potentially divulged sensitive information to me. This consideration carried through to the analysis and presentation of data in attempting to present a balanced argument.

Further, awareness of any distress participants might experience was essential during interviews. Care was taken to provide participants with the opportunity to take a break if needed, or to terminate the interview should that be required (though this option was not taken by any participants) (Braun & Clarke, 2013; Liamputtong, 2013).

4.3 Transcription and recording of interviews

Kvale and Brinkman (2015) suggested that qualitative researchers should have a focus on the validity, or credibility, of their transcription. Transcriptions 'are translations from an oral to a written language' (Kvale & Brinkman, 2015, p. 204), which means that the production of a transcript involves a series of judgements on the part of the researcher, related to the research aims, methods, and analytic goals, all of which may impact upon the particular meaning that is (co-) constructed.

In the present research, the focus was on the content of the interviews, on the macro rather than the micro. Therefore, my transcription was orthographic, or verbatim (Braun & Clarke, 2013). This method of transcription provides an in-depth level of detail about the verbal communication, while providing less about the non-verbal communication, which would be required for other forms of transcription and analysis. Some non-verbal communications—pauses, laughs, and noticeably audible inhales or

exhales—were noted when these seemed to be part of the dialogue, an attempt by the participant to express themselves by these means.

I undertook transcription myself. This had the benefit of enabling me to become well acquainted with the data (as suggested by Liamputtong, 2013). Through this process, I began to analyse the meanings within the interviews, recording preliminary thoughts and ideas to inform subsequent analyses (see Kvale & Brinkman, 2015). Similarly, this occurred through the process of manually recording and collating the interviews with senior managers.

4.4 Analysis

In order to analyse the collected data, I used three types of analysis. These different types of analysis allowed me to focus on and draw out different aspects of the data. Here, I outline how I understand these approaches and their differences.

4.4.1 Thematic Analysis

The main form of analysis used in this research was Thematic Analysis, which has a focus on recurring themes, or patterns, identified in data. As Braun and Clarke (2006) describe, Thematic Analysis is 'a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within the data' (p. 79). Thematic Analysis is acknowledged to be a 'foundational method for qualitative analysis' (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 78), and is possibly the most widely used method of data analysis in qualitative research (Braun & Clarke, 2013).

The undertaking of Thematic Analysis in this research began with reading and re-reading the source of data, in this case the interview transcripts and collated versions of manually recorded interviews, in order to become familiar with and make sense of

the data (Bailey, 2008). The reading of the transcripts was heavily influenced by the theoretical perspectives outlined in the previous chapter. These perspectives assisted in framing the data and making meaning of what was present (see Wetherell & Edley, 2014 for a discussion of theory-driven thematic analysis).

I then began examination of each transcript and set of interview notes in an attempt to make sense of what participants were saying, within and across interviews (Liamputtong, 2013). Repeated patterns within and across the transcripts became apparent through these many readings, paving the way for coding and theme development.

According to Charmaz (2006), coding is 'the process of defining what the data are about' (p. 43), and of labelling and categorising certain pieces and sections of data. I began marking 'interesting' or meaningful sections of the data, guided by my theoretical approach and the research questions (see Boyatzis, 1998). The process of coding thus facilitated my reflecting upon the content of the data, and identifying elements that might eventually develop into themes (Hansen, 2006).

In the coding process I employed the ideas of Liamputtong (2013), who suggested that both initial coding and axial coding are necessary to enable researchers to make connections between observations of data. When I began coding, I wrote down preliminary ideas and impressions about the data and assigned initial codes to 'chunks' of the data—a few words to describe an idea, experience, or concept being discussed by the participant (Boyatzis, 1998). These preliminary ideas and impressions included actions, objects, emotions, events, and processes described by participants (Patton, 2002).

Following, in what Liamputtong (2013) referred to as the axial coding stage, I then considered if and how these codes might relate to each other, and if and how they could be grouped together into themes. Coding and theme development is an iterative process, and so I moved back and forth between my developed codes, themes, and the research questions to see if they worked in relation to each other, to the data set as a whole, and whether the codes and themes were answering the research questions (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Finally, I worked to define the themes, undertaking an iterative process of returning to the data and determining whether the themes needed further refinement. This iterative process ensured that the data were reflected in the developed themes, and allowed me to develop a clear picture from the data and analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2013; Richards & Morse, 2007).

4.4.2 Discourse Analysis

Discourse Analysis was also used as an analytic tool in this research (in Chapter 6). Given the theoretical focus on meaning being constructed through interaction, and language as playing a large part in the construction and (re)production of understandings and meanings, utilising an analytical tool which has a focus on the constructive nature of language is a logical progression. Discourse Analysis sees language as central to analysis of meaning. It has its origins in critical psychology and it 'takes language as its central *topic*, examining the ways in which people talk about—or construct—things like identities, attitudes, and emotions' (Wetherell & Edley, 2014, p. 355, emphasis in original).

Discourse Analysis is used in many different ways. Some types of Discourse Analysis have a focus, for example, on micro level interactions, while others see language as both constructive of, and constrained by, broader social and cultural

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realities, consistent with and suited to a social constructionist approach (Burr, 2003). In this project, Discourse Analysis is applied as by Wetherell and colleagues (1987), whereby discourse refers to spoken, written, formal and informal interactions; language is seen as constructive and action-oriented, and, as such, it is not neutral but accomplishes certain things for the speaker (see also Edley & Wetherell, 1999; Edwards & Potter, 1992; Wetherell & Edley, 1999, 2014). This form of Discourse Analysis acknowledges the ability of language and speech to accomplish things for the speaker at the local level, but also the ways in which language, speech, and identity construction can be constrained by broader structural features of a society and culture (Ussher & Perz, 2015; Wetherell et al., 1987).

Discourse Analysis is used in Chapter 6 (analysis of interviews with working fathers) to investigate the ideologies underlying individuals' constructions of reality; this analysis included consideration of constructs such as interpretative repertoires and subject positions. Edley (2001) described interpretative repertoires as coherent or understandable ways of discussing things, and defines the construct of subject positions as 'locations within a conversation' and 'the identities made relevant by specific ways of talking' (p. 210). Talk is thus viewed as performative and (re)productive in that discourses are considered both indicative of the subject positions available to speakers, and as able to assist in the maintenance or challenge of wider social and cultural processes and expectations (see also Billig et al., 1988; Ussher & Perz, 2015).

Edley (1999, 2001; see also Wetherell & Edley, 2014) also made a distinctive link between Discourse Analysis and masculinity. In particular, he suggested that 'there is a growing consensus that language lies at the heart of understanding men and masculinity, with many writers now insisting that masculinity (and gender more

generally) is something constructed in and through discourse' (Edley, 2001, p. 191; see also Locke & Yarwood, 2017; Wetherell & Edley, 2014). Discourse Analysis espouses the view that the behaviours associated with masculinity are not symptoms of it, but are constitutive of it in the sense that engaging in and showing complicity with and support for those behaviours carries *status*; men learn what to say and do, and how to say and do things—men learn to be masculine (Edley, 2001; Edley & Wetherell, 1999). In particular, when using Discourse Analysis, 'gender comes to be understood as something that is 'done' or **accomplished** in the course of social interaction' (Edley, 2001, p. 192, emphasis in original; see also West & Zimmerman, 1987; 2009). The behaviours that men engage in are seen as a consequence of masculinity. This approach is thus well suited to this research, which sees gender and masculinity as a social construction, as performative, and as able to achieve certain things for the individual.

Further, Edley (2001) suggested that because masculinity and femininity are not seen as fixed, but, rather, as constructed or 'done', they can also be 'undone' through action and interaction. As Edley stated, '[t]ransforming the *status quo* becomes understood as a matter of challenging and changing discourses, encouraging people to tell different stories about themselves and others' (2001, p. 193). Though Edley (2001) emphasised that the ingrained nature of masculinity and femininity means these kinds of changes cannot be made easily, focusing on the constitutive nature of language, what it accomplishes, and what it can accomplish assists in moving towards this transformation.

Discourse Analysis, then, is concerned with how language can maintain, (re)produce, and challenge power and power structures, how talk can achieve and maintain a powerful and privileged position for the speaker (further discussed in Chapter

6). Discourse Analysis is thus both a natural progression from the theoretical frameworks described in the previous chapter, and a good fit for investigating questions surrounding gender such as those in this research.

4.4.3 Thematic Discourse Analysis

I use Thematic Discourse Analysis, or Discourse Analysis-lite as Braun and Clarke (2013) termed it, in Chapter 7 of this thesis. Chapter 7 combines my data from interviews with working fathers with the data of Dr Sarah Hunter, who investigated primary caregiving fathers in her PhD research (the methodology will be outlined in Chapter 7; also see Appendix E for one of Dr Hunter's published papers which outlines her textual data). Thematic Discourse Analysis is a form of patterns-based Discourse Analysis which is broadly concerned with analysing patterns in language use connected with the construction of reality. This analytic method has more of a focus on the discursive features of language than regular forms of Thematic Analysis, and speech is viewed as an action which can achieve things for the speaker (Ussher & Perz, 2015). For example, patterns in speech may be identified as accounting for an action or viewpoint, when recounting or describing an experience, or to construct an identity. Of course, within a constructionist framework it must be acknowledged that what a person considers 'sayable', or the discourses they see as available to them, are constrained by social and interactional contexts (Wetherell & Edley, 2001). In addition, the discourses engaged by participants reveal the work they are doing in resisting, taking up, or challenging certain positions and identities. Thematic Discourse Analysis is thus an analytic method that has a focus on language as constructive, and as both interactional and influenced by wider social context (Ussher & Perz, 2015). Thematic Discourse Analysis focuses on understanding how accounts are constructed in certain ways,

identifies discursive themes and patterns in data, and then 'applies the tools of Discourse Analysis "lightly" to explore how themes construct reality in particular ways' (Braun & Clarke, 2013, p. 177). Being a combination of Thematic Analysis and some pared back linguistic features of Discourse Analysis, Thematic Discourse Analysis provides a useful analytic tool to analyse data.

4.5 Reflexivity

As discussed in Chapter 3, the researcher cannot be divorced from the research process. This is particularly so when undertaking qualitative research, because the researcher is often engaging in interpretive practices (Braun & Clarke, 2013; Landman, 2006). It must, therefore, be acknowledged that my own experiences and beliefs will have influenced the research and the interpretative process. In addition, acknowledgement and reflection upon this offers the opportunity to further develop my understanding of the research, myself, and my skills (Liamputtong, 2013).

Oakley (1996) described the research process as one which relies, to some extent, upon power. Thus, she emphasised the need for clear and explicit research methods because methods of research, and particularly interviews, have the potential—depending in part upon the status of those being interviewed—to be exploitative in nature. Landman (2006) further stated 'researchers benefit from a process that is based on some form of contract, and questions of power, advantage, reciprocation and recognition of time and effort are seemly' (p. 432).

It is therefore necessary to acknowledge that, in this research, certain positions were privileged, with political and methodological implications flowing from this privileging. The fathers who participated were white, heterosexual, middle-class men and the focus on this certain group arguably (re)produced the privilege of their position

in this kind of research: there is the potential for this research to reaffirm the normative positioning of white, heterosexual, middle-class men as the authority on this issue—and likewise of their experiences or views being the default. Their willingness to be involved in the research, as opposed to other groups of individuals, perhaps suggests an underlying assumption of their privilege to be heard. Reproducing the power of this particular group was not an aim of the research, however it should be acknowledged as a possible outcome.

Bacchi and Eveline (2009) note that 'data do not describe reality; they create it. Hence the focus shifts from the 'facts' produced to the questions asked and who gets to ask them' (p. 13). It could be added that who gets to answer these questions also creates reality and thus needs focus. Though Bacchi and Eveline were not specifically referring to any interviewing situation in particular, they make the point that researchers (and policy makers) need to 'listen deeply' to people from a variety of backgrounds, and particularly those in positions of less power. The very 'doing' of researchers asking questions and collecting data creates a medium through which data travel and are transformed; they become 'cloudy' versions of the lived experiences described by participants. Thus, it should be acknowledged that data and analysis are a few steps removed from the everyday lives of the people involved, and they create and (re)produce their own truth. This research has a focus on the lived experiences of a particular, privileged group of men; but I would like to acknowledge that there is a scarcity of research in this area which explores the experiences of groups from varied and oppressed backgrounds.

It was also an interesting experience conducting this research as a single, (relatively) young female. Many participants asked if I had children, if I had a family

too, and this put me in a position of deciding whether and what to disclose. This can be a difficult decision because, as many have suggested, it can create a false sense of intimacy but at the same time can facilitate rapport (Braun & Clarke, 2013; Liamputtong, 2013; Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). At the time of conducting this research I did not have children, and I felt that disclosing this to participants may call into question my credibility to write and research about the issue of parenting. After all, how could I fully appreciate and understand their positions, and their experiences? And how could I adequately capture and encompass their experiences in my analysis and write-up?

I wrestled with these ideas and with the prospect that it was not possible for me as a researcher to connect with their experiences. On the other hand, a researcher does not necessarily have to have first-hand experience to develop thoughts and analyses regarding a topic (Braun & Clarke, 2013). The presence of participant questions, though, presents itself as a discursive curiosity in and of itself. Were they designed to undermine my potential disapproval of their lack of parental involvement? Was it an attempt to connect through the topic of discussion, to find a common ground and reduce their potential nervousness about being open with a stranger? I found my reaction to the question of particular interest. It led me to examine and improve my interviewing techniques and skills and, I assume, the impact of these kinds of interactions on the data. It led me to accept my role within the research, where previously I had been thinking of myself as a tool in the research process. It led me to fully understand that it is not possible to reduce your role in the research process, that there is no way not to leave a proverbial mark when you have contact with participants, and are asking them to share personal stories and experiences with you. Thus, it is important to be reflexive about the potential impact you may have on the research process—'[t]he reflexivity of the researchers makes their research findings more credible' (Liamputtong, 2013, p. 30).

I decided the need to respect my participants and their contribution to my research demanded that I reveal that I did not have children when this was relevant. Participants responded differently in each case, some jokingly suggesting that I was lucky not to have sleepless nights and weekend sports runs. My perception was that this disclosure did not affect their openness with me. It could possibly have enhanced their interest in explaining what it was like (for them).

4.5.1 Interviewing, and interviewing men

Although both men and women were interviewed in this research (male and female senior managers for the research presented in Chapter 8), the majority of participants were male, and I want to reflect here upon the experience of interviewing men as a female. Given that, first, interviews are a space where meaning is co-constructed and, second, any interaction is an occurrence where identity and meaning can be challenged and/or shored up, conducting interviews with men has the potential to be fraught with the (re)production of gendered identities. As mentioned in the methods section in Chapter 6 (which explores and analyses men's constructions of parenting), it is therefore imperative to both emphasise the importance of and reflect upon conducting interviews with men.

Edley (2001) and Edley and Wetherell (2014) discussed the ability of interviews (and discourse analysis) to elucidate the identity work that men can do to maintain accordance with hegemonic masculinity. Further, Chowdhury (2017) wrote that interviews can provide spaces within which masculinities can be shored up, reinvented, and indeed constructed in relation to the interviewer themselves. Highlighting this identity work is imperative in identifying possible strategies for social change in relation to men and masculinities. Australian researcher Barbara Pini (2009) also suggested that

attendance to the work that men do before, during, and after interviews can give much information regarding how masculine identity is constructed, and, in particular, how men position themselves in relation to a female interviewer. Being part of an all-female research team interviewing men and analysing data in relation to parenting, I suggest that this space may have provided an opportunity for a more open, 'softer' masculinity to be constructed (see Pini, 2009; Pini & Pease, 2013; Sallee & Harris, 2011). However, it also must be considered that inherent power dynamics exist between men and women, and, particularly in interviews with male senior managers, this was apparent. In attempting to organise interviews, many of the male managers (but not female managers) emphasised their business and their importance—often through the need to use an intermediary to organise the interviews (see Pini, 2009; Sallee & Harris, 2011). These occurrences provide examples of the performance and shoring up of masculinity through interactions with male interviewees—and highlights the need to be aware of this potential when interviewing men.

4.6 Summary

In this chapter, I have introduced and described the methodological approach of this research. It employs a qualitative framework, and critical methodologies informed by constructionist theoretical standpoints. The combination of Thematic Analysis, Discourse Analysis, and Thematic Discourse Analysis across this research provides a way to analyse the local level discursive interactions of the participants I interviewed while also taking into account the broader social implications for and of those thematic patterns and patterns of speech about FWA. The methodological approach outlined here thus provides a strong and appropriate framework to answer the questions being investigated in this project. It also allows a detailed and multifaceted way to analyse data and present results.

In Chapter 5, I present a paper which was published in the journal *Gender, Work & Organization*. The paper presents and discusses findings relating to the interviews conducted with working fathers and investigated how they talked about paid work, and flexible working arrangements.

Chapter 5: 'I might be a bit of a front runner': An analysis of men's uptake of flexible work arrangements and masculine identity

<u>5.1 Preamble</u>

The literature reviewed in Chapter 2 highlighted the importance and the influence of organisational factors in men's decision making around the use and non-use of flexible working arrangements. In particular, the importance of organisational expectations of dedication to paid work in the form of the ideal worker norm were demonstrated by the reviewed literature to continue to be one of the more influential factors. Therefore, this chapter, comprised of a paper published in the *Gender, Work and Organization* journal, was guided by the literature reviewed in Chapter 2 and aimed to investigate the first two stated research questions under investigation in the thesis.

Statement of Authorship

Title of Paper	'I might be a bit of a front runner': An analysis of men's uptake of flexible work arrangements and masculine identity
Publication Status	☑ Published ☐ Accepted for Publication ☐ Submitted for Publication ☐ Unpublished and Unsubmitted work written in manuscript style
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Contribution to the Paper	Designed the study, drafted ethics application and was responsible for recruitment, conducted interviews, analysed results, drafted the manuscript, responded to reviewers and revised manuscript, acted as corresponding author.
Overall percentage (%)	70%
Certification:	This paper reports on original research I conducted during the period of my Higher Degree by Research candidature and is not subject to any obligations or contractual agreements with a third party that would constrain its inclusion in this thesis. I am the primary author of this paper.
Signature	Date 10/9/19

Co-Author Contributions

By signing the Statement of Authorship, each author certifies that:

  i.   the candidate's stated contribution to the publication is accurate (as detailed above);
  ii.   permission is granted for the candidate in include the publication in the thesis; and
  iii. the sum of all co-author contributions is equal to 100% less the candidate's stated contribution.

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Signature	Date 10 /9/ 2019

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5.2 Abstract

In most Western countries men's use of flexible work arrangements (FWA) is low. Intersections of gender and organizational culture are likely to contribute to this circumstance but have received little attention. This research aims to investigate men's experiences of FWA use and non-use to understand contextual factors influencing men's decisions and how men construct their identities in relation to work, parenting and FWA. Based on semi-structured interviews with 15 men, discourse analysis identified that workplace culture and the ideal worker norm strongly influence men's decision making regarding FWA use, and feature in identity construction. Most men adhered to traditional constructions of masculinity in their talk, even when utilising FWA which was constructed as an individual choice and a privilege. Some men constructed themselves as 'ground-breakers' but still used traditionally masculine attributes to achieve this. Overall the results highlighted a need to encourage societal and organizational support for men's FWA use.

Keywords: Flexible work arrangements, Masculinity, Organizational culture, Ideal worker norm, Parenting.

5.3 Introduction

In Western countries, men who are fathers often spend long hours in paid work. For example, Australian fathers work an average of 46 hours per week when their children are under 5 years, and an average of 40-46 hours per week when their children are under 12 years (Baxter, 2013). This limits the time men are able to spend with their families. Women, however, are much more likely to undertake part-time paid work

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when their children are under 12 years and, as a result, are responsible for the bulk of caregiving.

Enabling men to spend more time with their families could confer benefits to health and well-being of men, their partners, and their children. For example, working long hours has been linked to unhealthy eating, reduced physical activity, increased tobacco and alcohol use, and increased stress and burnout (Bardoel et al., 2008). Reduced work hours would provide opportunities for men to be more involved fathers and to develop a father-child bond (Fletcher et al., 2014; Pocock, 2005a) which has been linked to positive health and development of children (Huerta et al., 2013). In addition, men's reduced work hours may enhance women's ability to participate in the workforce while their children are growing up, and improve women's work-life balance. Finally, men and women who are satisfied with their work-life balance are likely to be more productive workers and happier citizens (Craig & Mullan, 2010; Pocock, 2005a).

One strategy that can enable men to spend more time with their families is the use of flexible working arrangements (FWA). FWA refers to working anything other than standard office hours, which are typically 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday. FWA includes part-time work, a compressed work week, working from home, utilising leave options (including parental leave), and flexi-time. Huerta and colleagues (2013) suggested that it is the quality and not the quantity of time fathers spend with children that matters, but time spent with children is often dictated by the father's working hours and availability while children are awake. Halford (2006), for example, found that when fathers were able to work from home they reported an increase in the quality of the interactions with their children; not commuting left more time for family meals and involvement in children's activities.

In Scandinavian countries a long-standing gender equity agenda directs family-friendly employment initiatives to both men and women. Fathers are offered up to three months of non-transferable paternity leave, and these countries are world leaders in terms of men's utilisation of FWA beyond the infancy period (Haas & Rostgaard, 2011; Huerta et al., 2013). Outside Scandinavia, men's use of FWA is much lower than women's in most countries (Huerta et al., 2013), including Australia (Craig & Mullan, 2010). Historically, Australia endorsed the 'male breadwinner' model and this has profoundly constrained accepted roles for men and women, reinforced the association of masculine identity and paid work, and contributed to the formation of gendered attitudes about paid and unpaid work (van Egmond et al., 2010). Connell (2005b) maintains that one consequence of this on-going division of paid and unpaid labour was the subordination of the private sphere and, with it, feminine identity; this in turn reinforces the association between masculinity and paid work.

Brandth and Kvande (2016) found that, where men had been afforded the opportunity to combine work and parenting by using FWA, they engaged with discourses which continued to emphasise their connection to paid work. Often this was achieved by continuing to engage in work and work-related activities while on parental leave. Miller (2011) found that men who utilised FWA and parental leave could experience identity dilemmas, because of the strong association between masculinity and paid work. Thus, fathers often have intentions of being involved, however will approach fatherhood as something that can fit around their jobs and careers. Miller (2011) found this was particularly so when fathers returned to work after parental leave. While some of her participants did draw upon ideas of caring masculinities, most engaged in discourses that emphasised the breadwinner/carer dichotomy.

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The male breadwinner model continues to influence the Australian government's policy and legislative stance in relation to work and parenting (Brennan, 2011; Dreyfus, 2013). A Paid Parental Leave scheme introduced in 2011 offered 18 weeks' leave to the primary carer. This was likely to be a woman, partly because of the gender wage gap in Australia, 'the difference between women's and men's average weekly full-time equivalent earnings' even where similar training and skills are required (WGEA, 2014). The uptake of Paid Parental Leave predominantly by women served to reproduce the idea of women as responsible for caregiving and reinforced the accepted gendered division of paid and unpaid labour (Brennan, 2011; Dreyfus, 2013). Further, Baxter (Baxter, 2000) has argued that the scant attention paid by Australian governments to men's paternity leave and flexible work options has served to reinforce the idea that men do not require them (Haas & Hwang, 1995).

The external social and political climate, including policy and practice, influences organizations and the availability and uptake of FWA by men. Organizational cultures additionally reinforce gender roles (Coltrane et al., 2013; Connell, 2014d; Pullen & Knights, 2007). Important in maintaining this is the ideal worker norm. As articulated by Acker (1990), the concept refers to a person who is able to give priority to work with no outside distractions. Historically this has been the male worker who, it is assumed, has a female partner at home to look after his domestic arrangements, leaving him free to dedicate himself to work. The ideal worker norm can thus be seen not only to be prescriptive for women but to restrict men's abilities to deviate as well, at odds with supporting fathers to be more involved in parenting.

While some argue that the ideal worker norm is less salient now women's workforce participation approaches that of men (Dreyfus, 2013), there is ample evidence for its continued existence (Pocock, 2005a). For example, in interviews with new fathers

in Quebec, Rehel (2014) found that participants expressed concerns about how 'violating the image of the ideal worker would impact their work lives' (p. 120).

Thus, even though a formal policy for men and FWA may exist within an organization, this does not necessarily equate to support for its use. Perceptions within organizations of flexible policies being for women/mothers contribute to men's low uptake of FWA (Bygren & Duvander, 2006; Cech & Blair-Loy, 2014; Wayne & Cordeiro, 2003). As Gregory and Milner (2009) suggested, men's uptake of policies is limited by things such as 'perceptions of their entitlement, that is, perceptions that men's claims to family responsibilities are valid' (p. 5). Sanders and colleagues (2016) found that the lack of support from managers and co-workers for men's use of FWA, and career consequences including missing out on promotions and pay raises, also limited men's uptake of FWA. In many workplaces it seems that, although language and policy has formally changed, employees 'are still operating within a highly gendered context; so it appears that language change without corresponding culture change is bound to fail' (Smithson & Stokoe, 2005, pp. 156-157).

Ely and Meyerson (2010) demonstrated that naming and challenging gendered stereotypes and processes had an impact on the ways in which male employees on an oil rig related to male peers as well as to their families, and the ways in which they performed masculinity. They showed not only that performance of masculinity within workplaces can be interrupted but that this can result in organisational culture becoming more supportive of men utilising non-standard arrangements (see also Connell, 2014d).

Relatively little research in Australia has focussed on men's use of FWA and the intersection of fatherhood and masculinity in relation to this. The combination of the ideal worker being male and masculine identity being performed primarily at work has

contributed to work-life balance being seen as a woman's issue. The little research attending to gender in this area (Bardoel et al., 2008; McLaughlin & Muldoon, 2014; Pini & McDonald, 2008) suggests that understanding how men negotiate their masculine identities in relation to FWA use may assist in developing strategies to encourage uptake.

In this study, men's utilisation of FWA will be explored in an Australian context. The research aims to investigate men's experiences of FWA use and non-use, and to outline the organizational and individual factors which participants described as having an influence on their application for and uptake of FWA. It aims to explore how men discuss work and parenting responsibilities, and how their accounts may contribute to challenge and change within the current gender and work structure. Constructions of masculine identity, and specifically how men construct their identities in relation to work and parenting, are paid particular attention.

5.4 Data and Method

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with Australian fathers, conducted between August and December 2015. Participants were recruited through flyers, snowball sampling, and also through dissemination of the research by radio and print media. Recruitment material called for 'Hands on Dads' aged 18 years or older, who were currently working, and had at least one child between the ages of 1 and 12 years.

All fathers who responded (and met the inclusion criteria) were interviewed until it was clear that the same themes were being identified within and across interviews (Guest, Bunce, & Johnson, 2006). This approach resulted in fifteen men being interviewed. Furthermore, similar themes were identified across interviews and

participants, for the most part, regardless of sector or hierarchical position. Most participants identified as Anglo-Saxon Australian, except two who identified as Italian-Australian and European-Australian, respectively. All participants were in heterosexual relationships and were married, except one who classified his relationship as de facto. Participants worked in a range of occupations across the public and private sectors; these included finance, IT, research, social work and planning, and administration positions. Four participants held senior or management positions. Two participants had partners who did not work at all and the others had partners who worked part-time, though some participants noted that their partners had previously worked full-time while they worked part-time. For participants themselves, the majority worked full-time, with three using a form of flexible working such as flexi-time, and three worked part-time. Participant ages ranged from 31-52 years, with the majority between 33 and 40. Four participants had children aged within and outside of the inclusion criteria, and discussion of older children and relationships with them also featured in the interviews.

Interviews were conducted by the first author and covered topics including parenting and housework arrangements and how these were negotiated with workplaces and partners, if and how participants had applied for and taken leave immediately or soon after the birth of a child, interactions with their supervisors and managers, and if and why they were or were not currently using an FWA. Interviews lasted from between 39 minutes to 110 minutes, and were held either in the first author's office or at the participant's workplace, with one interview being conducted at a participant's residence. Each interview was recorded and transcribed verbatim by the first author. At the point of transcription, all names were changed and names of workplaces were omitted to maintain confidentiality. The transcripts were then read, re-read and coded by searching the data for patterns of talk that recurred across and within the interviews. During the

data collection and analysis process, the first author discussed aspects of the data, codes and themes with her co-authors to confirm preliminary ideas and analysis.

Both Thematic Analysis (TA) (Braun & Clarke, 2006) and Discourse Analysis (DA) (Wetherell et al., 1987) were used to analyse data. Here, DA is applied as by Wetherell and colleagues (1987), whereby discourse refers to spoken, written, formal and informal interactions; language is seen as constructive and action-oriented, it is not neutral but accomplishes certain things for the speaker. Data were first grouped into themes through a process of reading and re-reading interview transcripts to find similarly occurring content. DA then aimed to investigate the ideologies underlying individuals' constructions of reality; this included the application of constructs such as interpretative repertoires, ideological dilemmas and subject positions. Edley (2001) described interpretative repertoires as coherent or understandable ways of discussing things. Billig and colleagues (1988) suggested that ideological dilemmas are made up of beliefs, values and practices of a society or culture and describe the lived ideologies of individuals. These differing ways of talking about or making sense of an object or event do not arise separately, but are created or constructed in opposition to each other. Further, the construct of subject positions is defined by Edley (2001) as 'locations within a conversation. They are the identities made relevant by specific ways of talking' (p. 210). Talk is viewed as performative and (re)productive in that discourses are considered both indicative of the subject positions individuals present as available to them and also as able to assist in the maintenance or challenge of wider social and cultural processes and expectations (Ussher & Perz, 2015). Analysis is based on established methods and theory and extracts are provided below to allow the reader to assess the validity of the analysis. The analysis and discussion are also presented together, as is common for qualitative data (Grbich, 1999).

<u>5.5 Findings and Discussion</u>

Three key themes were identified through analysis: the pervasive existence of the ideal worker norm, constructions of masculinity which were primarily grounded in paid work, and discourses of privilege and choice drawn upon by participants when discussing FWA. As will be seen, these work to position men's use of FWA as non-normative and suggest that challenging accepted masculine subjectivities and increasing men's FWA use will be difficult.

5.5.1 Ideal Worker Norm

The ideal worker norm was described by Acker (1990) as an organizational expectation that an individual will be dedicated to work; historically this has been the male worker. Analysis identified that the ideal worker norm was significant and worked to shape participants' constructions of themselves in relation to work. These constructions were apparent whether or not participants worked full-time. In their descriptions of work and parenting roles many participants in this study reaffirmed the notion of the ideal worker as male. In addition, the notion of having someone to rely on to run the household and take on caring responsibilities was constructed as a factor which enabled these participants to fulfil the role of dedicated employee. Organizational culture, and upper management within organizations, was positioned as capable of reinforcing or challenging, to some degree, this ideal.

Considering first those who worked full-time, most participants explained that they had flexibility through use of accrued time to, for example, take an afternoon off to attend a school event, or leave early to pick children up from school. These activities served to demonstrate to their employers that they had some caring responsibilities

outside of work. Gary, for example, noted his efforts to help his daughter acclimatise at school:

I've taken ah let's call it an hour off each morning over the la-last week . . . to go into school with her . . . I've been sitting with her and doing her work (33, Acquisitions Manager)

In this way participants presented a modified construction of employee, one which was not entirely consistent with the expectations of the ideal worker norm. However, extended analysis of participants' accounts showed that their demonstrations of caring responsibilities were constrained by self-surveillance. This is described by Foucault as a mechanism of control, through which norms and dominant discourses are internalised and exercised by the individual as though they were always being watched (Foucault, 1977).

Ernie, for example, had been using accrued time to attend school visits with his wife and daughter but had decided not to go to the most recent visit:

That was good, um but cause we've got a few [school visits] at the moment . . . it was all gonna get all too late . . . so I decided just to let them go to it (52, Social Planner)

When asked if there was an unspoken rule in the organization around not taking too much time off, Ernie replied 'not really, that's more my own perception of well I'm employed here to work'. For Ernie, and for other participants, requests for FWA provided examples of subject positions which were reflective of organizational expectations of an ideal worker. A further aspect of this positioning can be seen in Carl's extract below:

I'm sort of hesitant about approaching my boss about it though . . . I know that we're quite understaffed and I don't want to be seen as someone who sort of tries to get out of doing work (33, University Administration Officer)

In this explanation Carl constructed his decision not to request FWA as necessary because his workplace is understaffed; however he also positioned himself as a valuable employee for not requesting FWA, as opposed to someone who might try to avoid work. By taking up this subject position, and accessing discourses which emphasise value within an organization of dedicated employee, Carl's construction reinforced the notion of ideal workers as indispensable.

Some participants who worked part-time also engaged in self-surveillance. For example, Kieran had altered how he worked, often taking a shorter lunch break or not taking one at all in order to complete a full-time workload in four days. Kieran indicated this was necessary because the expectations of the organization were based on a full-time worker. Below, he described an exchange at one of his performance evaluations:

I say how would your expectations of me be different if I was working five days a week, and I always get a kind of puzzled look . . . and you know basically like oh I was actually evaluating your performance on a five day not a four day (39, Communication Specialist)

Thus part-time workers may also internalise organizational standards of, and attempt to perform as, ideal workers. Engagement with competing subject positions highlights that the current work structure is largely not amenable to employees simultaneously undertaking roles as ideal workers as defined here and part-time workers (Correll et al., 2014).

Further, the culture of the organization was identified as an important factor in shaping decisions. If the organization they worked for was not supportive of FWA use, participants said that their supervisors were discouraged from approving their requests. Mark, for example, noted that his supervisor was supportive of employees using FWA but that 'she doesn't really have any power or say or anything, she's just the insulator between us and management'. Phil similarly stated that his supervisor allowed him to utilise an informal flexible arrangement, but if the organization found out his supervisor would be reprimanded:

Previously it was more up to [the team leader or manager's] discretion . . . but they've clamped down the ah procedures I suppose it's fair to say in recent times (51, Social Worker)

These accounts appear contradictory in that Phil's supervisor is facilitating his flexible arrangement but Mark sees his supervisor as unable to do this. In both cases the supervisor appears to have some discretion in their decisions; however, upper management is ultimately providing the guidelines for these decisions. Similarly, participants across different sectors noted that even though FWA was formally available to them, the organizational culture required that they be in the office. Kieran, who worked in a permanent part-time position within a private, male-dominated industry, described his first encounter with a new manager:

We all had a new vice-president, and so I had a little interview and um she said to me this four day week thing, is this something that you plan on continuing forever? (39, Communication Specialist)

To Kieran, it was clear that his new manager expected him to return to work full-time. A culture of expectation that employees be in the office to work was further

demonstrated by Mike, a public sector employee. He detailed that he would often receive work-related phone calls when he had left for the afternoon, utilising accrued time, to pick up his children.

Mike also (re)produced these ideas around performing as the ideal worker, when he spoke of a co-worker who had begun working one day per week in order to take on caregiving responsibilities:

[He's] taken quite long qu-quite extreme changes in [his] work arrangements . . . for a for a man I guess you know to um, yeah he's an engineer too, to take ah almost ah all of his working time off (40, Program Officer)

Mike noted, however, that there were many women within his department who had either done this or were doing so now. His description of this as 'extreme' 'for a man' points to a wider societal and cultural expectation that men will continue to work while women will take time out of work to undertake caring responsibilities (Connell, 2005b).

As Mike's explanation shows however, his co-worker was not deterred from utilising FWA, and some participants in the current research have chosen to utilise FWA, regardless of the challenge this poses for the ideal worker norm. This choice appears to have required some negotiation of identity, which will be discussed below.

5.5.2 Masculine Identity and FWA Use

The construction and performance of masculine identity was an important factor in participants' accounts of adherence to the ideal worker norm and decisions around the use of FWA. A number of discourses were drawn upon in participants' negotiations of masculine identity, and a number of different subject positions were evident across

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and within interviews. Many participants were, for example, more involved in care work than traditional masculinity would prescribe. However, the language used when discussing their positions at work frequently emphasised their seniority, their success and/or the control they had over their work environments. So although there was a sense in which it seemed alternative masculinities were being constructed, these participants' descriptions of their care work seemed to be qualified, or moderated, by constructions of identity through paid work.

Harry, for example, described how he was able to come in to work later than others because 'I'm kind of senior enough in the organization now…that I can schedule based on when I want to have the meetings'. He noted that this enabled him to drop his children off in the morning, but emphasised that 'I really love my work um and I get really frustrated when I can't be in the office'. Most participants also firmly grounded their identities in paid work through the positioning of themselves in relation to their jobs. Nick, for example, associated masculine identity with achievement in his career, and performed masculinity through work status, as this extract highlights:

In reality if [my wife] worked full-time and I went part-time the income would be probably end up being more but I've worked my way to where I am for a long time . . . so it would be absolutely silly to stop now and go part-time (42, Team Leader)

Participants did not use the difficulties they may have faced as parents to position themselves as strong, in control, or as achieving goals: they used their jobs to position themselves this way. This is consistent with a study conducted by Smith and Winchester (1998) which examined how men negotiated masculine identity at the work/home boundary. These authors found that, even though participants talked about wanting to be home and to participate in caring responsibilities, they still based their primary

identities in the workplace. They also positioned their own achievements and career progression as more important than that of their partners, a position implied by Nick in the above extract.

In addition, discussion of the need to provide was evident in participants' accounts and worked to construct the participants' primary role within the family as the breadwinner. This was most noticeable among those who firmly based their identities in paid work. Participants spoke of needing to work more to provide for their families; for example, Harry said:

[Your] instinct is that ah that you need to go out and earn money, and so as soon as the baby was born um my work hours actually ah kicked up again and so I probably went back to working, 50 55 60 hours a week again (39, Senior Lecturer)

Related to this, some participants described feeling pressure to invest in a career to support their family when their children were young, which meant working full-time and often dedicating time to work outside of official work hours. This perspective has been heavily associated with masculine identity, particularly in Australia (Connell, 2005b).

Some participants explained the need to provide by invoking an essentialist discourse that sees behaviour determined by genetic or biological factors, as can be seen in this extract from Gary:

I can't imagine her going back to work and letting me look after the children when they were very young . . . so I think there's a greater desire ah desire's maybe not the right word, um *instinct* is probably a better word ah *for the female partner to stay home*

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whereas the male partner wants to be involved but there's also an *instinct* um I or at least I've felt one *to provide* (33, Acquisitions Manager, emphasis added)

Gary's use of the word 'instinct' here, and Harry's above, constructs behaviour in relation to parenting as biological, providing an explanation for the desire to work full-time. Interestingly, Gary and others indicated that it was useful for them to be able to take time off of work for their children, and that a cultural norm around gender roles exists in Australia:

Culture does have a part to play…among my you know very small group of of friends in the context of Australia . . . [it would] strike us as a bit odd if she went back to work and he sort of stayed home to look after the kids (Gary, 33, Acquisitions Manager)

The invocation by these participants of both a biological and cultural explanation for parenting and work behaviour indicates an ideological dilemma—that there are competing discourses, or contradictory lived ideologies, that are experienced by these individuals (Edley, 2001) in relation to parenting and work.

The above discussion demonstrates, however, that while there appeared to be alternative discourses available for use in identity construction, most participants accessed discourses and maintained subject positions consistent with expected gender roles (Connell, 2005b). Ultimately the dilemma was resolved by recourse to the incontrovertibility of essentialist discourse.

The most distinct attempt at an alternative construction of masculinity is the 'ground-breaker discourse'. The participants who engaged with this discourse were currently, or had previously been, working part-time. They noted the difficulties they faced in the workplace; for Kieran (see above) this was the assumption by co-workers,

after he had been working part-time for over a year, that he was still a full-time worker. In the below extract Phil outlined some of the reactions he encountered when he started working part-time so he could spend more time with his children:

At times [I] maybe was a little bit judged by some who had different attitudes towards men taking time off to do that, um you know they were primarily people who um had fairly strong ideas about what a male in a relationship or a father did as opposed to what a mother did (51, Social Worker)

The participants who engaged with the 'ground-breaker discourse', though, reappropriated these difficulties. In the below extract, for example, Phil positions himself as psychologically strong, as having power and control over his own behaviour, and of not caring what others thought of his choices:

For the most part it didn't bother me that much because I just thought, well you know maybe in some respects *I might be a bit of a front runner* in you know men being able to do this a bit more and *might be helping to pave the way for other men to do it* . . . ah and in other respects I just didn't give a rats (laughs) . . . I wanted to do it I wanted to spend time with my kids and if other people thought badly of it or didn't do it themselves or whatever . . . it didn't bother me (51, Social Worker, emphasis added)

This discourse of 'paving the way', of being 'front runners', and making things easier for other men, can be understood to reproduce traditional notions of masculinity. These participants described themselves as having strength, perseverance and a sense of power in not caring what others thought of them and doing what they wanted to do. However, the use of this discourse in relation to a subject position that is usually associated with femininity—caretaking and working part-time—provides an example of an alternative construction of masculine identity.

Other research has found that working and caring fathers will engage with discourses of caring masculinities, use language which could be associated with mothers when discussing care, and construct masculinities which deviate from traditional notions of fathering (Doucet, 2006; Miller, 2011). Given that participants of this study were being asked to speak about parenting, it might have been expected that these kinds of discourses would be engaged. However, what the 'ground-breaker discourse' achieves for these participants is similar to what has been found in research into how men who work in 'feminised' occupations negotiate masculine identity. It allows distancing from feminised positioning (i.e., involvement in care work) and an emphasis of attributes which shore up masculinity (see Henson & Rogers, 2001; Hrženjak, 2013).

Engagement with this discourse attempts to legitimise the subject positions the participants took up, signalling that these positions were alternative to cultural and societal expectations of masculinity. Participants also positioned themselves in opposition to accepted masculine subjectivities by noting the existence of those gendered expectations in relation to parenting, and indicating that they had been judged by others for their decisions around parenting and work.

5.5.3 Framing FWA as an Individual Choice and a Privilege

The discourses accessed by participants when describing taking time off for the birth of their children as well as later use of FWA worked to construct the use of FWA as an individual choice and a privilege. First, participants framed the use of FWA primarily as an individual choice, and correspondingly childcare as an individual, family responsibility, rather than something that should be readily available and supported within an organization:

The day I was having to go back to work after the six weeks off after my son was born my eldest . . . I thought I so don't wanna go back to work I really do not wanna go back to work, I just wanna keep living this *lifestyle* forever (Frank, 42, Journalist, emphasis added)

Frank's description of the time he took off as a 'lifestyle' presents this as an individual choice, and brings forth ideas of self-indulgence, as opposed to what was framed by Frank as necessary—returning to full-time work. Frank also later referred to the time he took off by saying that 'everyone would love to be on holidays the whole time'. Another example of engagement with this discourse came from Nick, when he said 'I guess it comes down to what the individual wants and how they want to achieve it'. Relatedly, many participants described themselves as fortunate that they had the choice, and that their employers allowed them, to use FWA. David, for example, when discussing his ability to take time off during his working week and after his children were born suggested that this was because 'I was very fortunate . . . probably 99 percent of the population don't get that opportunity.' Carl similarly said 'I wasn't sort of expecting my employer to you know subsidise my parenting'.

Further, participants constructed taking time off of work, whether long term or short term, as a privilege. Drawing upon this discourse has the effect of constructing the use of FWA as neither something which should be considered normal or usual for a workplace to offer, nor as something to which employees should be entitled. This is consistent with other research which reported similar descriptions by employees that FWA need to be earned (Baxter, 2000; Kelly & Kalev, 2006). Engagement with this discourse reinforces the normality of the ideal worker and individual responsibility in managing work-life balance (Davies & Bansel, 2005).

Engagement with this privilege discourse could be interpreted within the conceptual framework of 'sense of entitlement', initially proposed by Suzan Lewis (1997). Lewis described how, in order for there to be a take-up of family-friendly policies, employees needed to feel entitled to both voice their needs and have these needs met. Particularly for men, support for familial responsibilities is seen as a perk rather than an entitlement and this perception presents a barrier to non-traditional working.

More recently, Gatrell and Cooper (2016) expanded upon this idea of entitlement. They suggested that organisational assumptions about caring and breadwinning, and who is responsible for these, intertwine with the 'sense of entitlement' that men and women feel in relation to family and work responsibilities. Men do not feel entitled to family support, while women do not feel entitled to career advancement—these differences feed into organisational assumptions, and lead to the continuation/normalisation of gendered practices at work and at home.

As a demonstration of a lack of 'sense of entitlement', the discourse of privilege was not typically drawn upon when participants talked about their partners, or women in general, taking time off from work or working part-time. David, for example, said he had assumed his wife was going to stay home with their children after they were born. Gary's account about his workplace similarly positions women's use of FWA as normal and unproblematic:

They happen all I think to be females ah and a number of them work part-time, so we've got an accountant who works in between school hours so she's got the time to drop off the kids and pick them up (33, Acquisitions Manager)

Discussing women's use of FWA in this way, but not men's, both reinforces and reflects the view that childcare and family responsibilities are primarily women's

responsibilities. It also works to reaffirm the idea that employers should not be responsible for men's use of FWA, and to reinforce the cultural belief that paid work and unpaid work should be distinctly separated (Connell, 2005b). Taking this into consideration, framing FWA use in this way (re)produces a discourse whereby women are seen as having a more valid reason to apply for and use FWA, which may assist in explaining why women are more likely than men to have their requests to use FWA granted, and why men can be reluctant to request it (Gregory & Milner, 2009; Praxis, 2015).

More recent research has identified that 'sense of entitlement' among fathers to family support from organisations is changing (see Gatrell et al., 2014b; Gatrell, Burnett, Cooper, & Sparrow, 2015), and that men may come to resent their organisations where support for family responsibilities is not received. An example of this changing 'sense of entitlement' could be seen in one of our participants' accounts, in which he remarked that his organisation provided opportunities for mothers to get home from site visits on time for their children but not for fathers. His account draws attention to the changing expectation that his organisation provide support for fathers in relation to family responsibilities—this support has typically been seen by organisations and families as for mothers rather than fathers. Overall, within the current research there did not seem to be a sense of resentment among these participants. However, the type of welfare state that individuals experience was found by Lewis and Smithson (2001) to have an influence on their expectations regarding support from both employer and state. Thus, if an individual lives within a cultural context which encourages individualism and personal accountability for familial responsibilities, they will be less likely to expect governmental/organisational support. As Connell (2013a; 2005b) has noted, Australia is highly patriarchal and support for the breadwinner/carer dichotomy is apparent in both

culture and social policy. In this cultural context, these participants' responses and general lack of 'sense of entitlement' to organisational support could be understood to be in keeping with expected gender roles within the Australian social climate.

The ability to take leave or to work flexible hours was also discussed as constituting a 'give-and-take' with employers, and the necessity of having a good relationship with a supervisor or manager was noted by many participants. Nick, for example, recounted asking his manager for a day off:

Because we have a strong relationship and I do a lot of um work that makes his life easier . . . he will accommodate back . . . so that's how all those relationships work if you don't have that it won't work (42, Team Leader)

In Nick's case, this type of relationship appeared easier for him to develop than for other participants because of his ability to work closely with his manager and to do 'work that [made] his life easier'. It seems his hierarchical position, and his implicit value stemming from it, may have afforded him the opportunity to accumulate workplace capital (Walumbwa & Christensen, 2013). It should be noted that this type of relationship may prove difficult for employees in junior positions (often women) to develop (Connell, 2014d). In describing the necessity of having a good relationship with their supervisors, supervisors are positioned as having a considerable amount of power in relation to employees' utilisation of FWA. This has the effect of the organization itself not being held accountable for ensuring implementation and promotion of both formal and informal support of these options. As was discussed earlier, supervisors have been positioned by some participants as 'insulators' and as not 'having any real power'. One possible explanation for these contradictory constructions is that the privilege discourse, by positioning supervisors as having authority and control to make decisions regarding

FWA use, provides a suitable explanation for the opposing subject positions of the participants—if supervisors are positioned as having power and control, then the participants' position as an ideal, compliant employee who needs to earn employer rewards makes sense. Alternatively, the hegemonic status of this privilege discourse may make it difficult to see and question the systemic organizational structures which provide a cultural backdrop for supervisors' decisions.

Davies and Bansel (2005) suggested that neoliberalism, a political environment promoting individual responsibility rather than collective community, has hegemonic status such that its effects and resulting discourses are difficult to see and question. It was evident that participants engaged with discourses consistent with neoliberalism when discussing men's use of FWA. Accessing and (re)producing discourses of individual choice and privilege around childcare and working arrangements does not work to interrupt the narrative of male as worker, female as carer or indeed to change the narrative around employer responsibility; rather, it continues to frame it as a family responsibility. In this way, men maintained a worker identity which, in the neoliberal environment, has been argued to be the most valued social identity (Featherstone, 2003). The subject positions taken up by participants thus highlighted that significant change within the current work structure may require a challenge to these discourses, and a reframing of men's use of FWA. As long as the use of FWA is seen as an individual choice and a privilege, and the dominant discourse of women as responsible for child rearing remains unchallenged, work-life balance will continue to be seen as a woman's issue, something that women need to work out in order to participate in paid work as well as have a family.

5.6 Conclusion

Overall, within this paper it is argued that most participants oriented to a masculine identity that was formed and performed on the basis of paid work, even when they deviated from traditional work expectations by varying their hours to increase time with family. This underscores the need to disrupt the association between paid work and masculinity, to encourage men to take up FWA. The influence of organizational culture on decisions to utilise FWA was strong, with many participants positioning themselves as ideal workers and engaging in self-surveillance. Use of FWA was framed as a privilege and an individual choice, providing no challenge to organizational culture nor altering the narrative around men's FWA uptake. Collectively, this impedes change within organizational contexts, encourages men to view achieving FWA as a personal responsibility, and masks the gendered nature of the (informal) discouragement that men face.

A prominent finding which may provide an avenue for increased uptake of FWA among men was the use of the 'ground-breaker discourse' by some participants. These participants were currently working, or had previously worked, part-time. Two things could be gleaned from their use of this discourse. The first is that, in providing an explanation or account for their behaviour, these participants positioned their choices as unusual or non-normative. Therefore, it is suggested that while legitimisation of this alternative construction of masculine identity is required, it will continue to be an 'othered' masculine identity.

Secondly, although the 'ground-breaker discourse' could be considered problematic due to the reinforcement of attributes of hegemonic masculinity, harnessing it may also provide an avenue for encouraging more men to take up FWA. It has the potential to encourage men to form alternative masculine identities because it provides

a way for men to continue to demonstrate and engage with an accepted masculinity. Brandth and Kvande (1998) suggested that some men are able to successfully rework their masculine identities by approaching having a child, and particularly care work, through engagement with masculine attributes such as strength and resilience.

Williams (2010) also suggested that when work no longer acts as a site for the achievement of masculine identity, identity will be renegotiated. Shirani and colleagues (2012) suggested that working fathers may find it difficult to engage with alternative masculinities due to the cultural emphasis on breadwinning in fathering identity— however the men who accessed the ground-breaker discourse demonstrated this possibility. They created a new story in relation to expected gender roles with which other men can engage, and which may work to normalise the choice and desire to be more involved in care work. Further, seeing men use FWA within the workplace can encourage others to take up FWA (Haas et al., 2002), and so engagement with this discourse may assist in challenging both masculine and organizational norms in relation to FWA use.

What needs to be considered is that, if this masculine identity is 'othered', men may be discouraged from taking it up. At the very least it seems it will take small, progressive steps for social change in relation to men's FWA use to occur. Beasley (2011) has suggested that gradual change of norms, involving small and overlapping 'transgressions', will facilitate progress. Though the 'ground-breaker' group of men drew upon masculine attributes in their constructions of identity, their incorporation of feminine qualities demonstrates an expansion of masculine identity into care and parenting in the organizational context. Such changes are gradual steps towards encouraging workplaces to consider men as fathers with responsibilities outside of work, and for these familial responsibilities to be normalised for men within workplaces.

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More rapid change will require discernible societal and organizational support for FWA use by men. Connell (2014d) suggested that men have significant power within organisations; understanding how this power can be used to disrupt practices which reinforce and reproduce gendered norms is important. However, it does appear that interrupting the tie between masculinity and paid work, and encouraging social change in ways that men can embrace, may require engaging with the hegemony of accepted masculine attributes.

It must be acknowledged that research in this area tends to centre on middle class men, who identify as white and heterosexual, which contributes to the (re)production of hetero-normativity in relation to work, family and men's experiences in relation to this issue. The current study is no exception, and that is one limitation of the research. Investigating the subject positions taken up, and identity construction by, a sample of lower class and/or non-white men, as well as LGBTQI+ individuals and families would broaden the scope and diversity of knowledge. In addition, future research may also wish to explore in more detail the influence of differing organisational cultures on men's choices in relation to FWA use, which was outside the scope of the present study.

Nevertheless, this research provides insight into factors which men perceive as barriers or enablers for FWA use, and in particular suggests that emphasising the strength in departing from organizational expectations may prove beneficial and be a fruitful path for future investigation. Supportive cultural environments both within and outside of organizations could accelerate this shift and also invite exploration.

Chapter 6: 'Unfortunately I'm a massively heavy sleeper': an analysis of fathers' constructions of parenting.

<u>6.1 Preamble</u>

This chapter is comprised of a paper published in *Men & Masculinities*. The paper explores fathers' constructions of parenting. This exploration seemed a logical progression from the previous chapter, given that the main aim of that chapter was to ascertain barriers and facilitators to men's use of flexible working arrangements for family reasons. This chapter looks at that same question but from the family rather than organisational perspective. It assists in answering the research question of the role that the construction of masculine and fathering identities plays in men's decisions around flexibility. Looking at factors that fathers name as barriers to their involvement with young children facilitates a deeper understanding of their decisions around stepping away from work to be more involved fathers, particularly in the early stages of a child's life.

Statement of Authorship

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Name of Principal Author (Candidate)	Ashlee Borgkvist
Contribution to the Paper	Designed the study, drafted ethics application and was responsible for recruitment, conducted interviews, re-analysed results, drafted the manuscript, responded to reviewers and revised manuscript, acted as corresponding author.
Overall percentage (%)	70%
Certification:	This paper reports on original research I conducted during the period of my Higher Degree by Research candidature and is not subject to any obligations or contractual agreements with a third party that would constrain its inclusion in this thesis. I am the primary author of this paper.
Signature	Date 10/9/19

Co-Author Contributions

By signing the Statement of Authorship, each author certifies that:

i. the candidate's stated contribution to the publication is accurate (as detailed above);

ii. permission is granted for the candidate in include the publication in the thesis; and

iii. the sum of all co-author contributions is equal to 100% less the candidate's stated contribution.

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Signature	Date 10.9.19

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6.2 Abstract

Expectations for fathers have changed over the past few decades—research has shown that many men express more egalitarian views towards fatherhood and being more involved in parenting, particularly in the care-taking and emotional aspects of parenting. However, despite intentions expressed before parenthood, parenting will often play out along more traditional, gendered lines. In this research we demonstrate how discourses used by fathers might work to maintain gendered divisions in relation to parenting and work. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews which covered men's experiences of work and parenting. Discourse analysis was employed to analyse the data. We identified that while participants expressed a desire to be involved fathers, often this did not transpire. Participants' inability to, or decisions not to be, actively involved were accounted for in various ways, and suggested a tension between what fathers recognise they should be doing, and what they are doing, as parents.

6.3 Introduction

Studies have shown that many men now approach fatherhood with egalitarian views regarding the split of childcare and domestic labour. However, once a baby is born the division of labour still tends to be split in terms of traditional gender roles, with women assuming the bulk of responsibility for child care as well as housework, often now in addition to paid employment (Drew & Watters, 2014; Miller, 2010; Rose, Brady, Yerkes, & Coles, 2015; Shirani et al., 2012). Numerous explanations exist for this divide, including the absence of structural and institutional supports for men to be more involved in caregiving; masculinity encouraging men to perform certain, acceptable parenting behaviours; and social and cultural expectations reinforcing the idea that men are not good at care work. What is clear is that there is a divergence between expectations of, and for, fathers and what fathers are practically doing in terms of

parenting. This suggests that men are making decisions not to be as involved in caregiving as changing expectations might dictate, which requires attention and consideration of the gendered expectations which might lead to these decisions. Further, although there are numerous studies demonstrating adherence to a traditional division of labour, there is less research which investigates how these gendered patterns of parenting and work are maintained (though, notably, see Locke & Yarwood, 2017). This paper thus aims to explore Australian men's constructions of parenting, if and how they construct alternative masculinities in relation to parenting, and to argue that numerous institutional constraints contribute to men's performances of masculinity and fathering.

6.4 Background

Expectations of fathers have changed over time, reflecting the complex and changing nature of society (Griswold, 2012) and what is considered good or normative fathering (Dolan, 2014; Marsiglio et al., 2013; Miller & Nash, 2016). However, fatherhood is also inextricably intertwined with masculinity (Hunter, Riggs, & Augoustinos, 2017). Thus, to legitimise their masculine status, men are influenced to perform fatherhood in certain ways, often in line with hegemonic masculinity (Coltrane, 1996; Connell, 1987; Hanlon, 2012; Johansson & Klinth, 2008). Historically, this performance has comprised financial provision and engagement with paid work almost to the exclusion of engagement with activities within the private sphere, a realm which has been considered more suitable for women (Hanlon, 2012; Perra & Ruspini, 2013; Shirani et al., 2012).

Adams and Coltrane (2004) suggest that 'families generally teach us that women and men should occupy different places in the social order. Relying on the ideology of separate spheres, families continue to raise children "to be" masculine or feminine' (p.

232). The ideology of separate spheres can be seen in the organisation of social structures such as schools, workplaces and other social institutions; in particular, it can be seen in the assumption that while both parents may be present for the birth of a child, women will then remain at home to be caregivers of the child for an extended period, while fathers will return to work very shortly thereafter or not take leave at all (Connell, 2005a; Miller, 2011; Williams, 2000). This is particularly so in Australia, where women are much more likely than men to return to work part-time, and to return once their children are over 12 months old (Baxter, 2013). Men (and women) construct their identities as parents, and make decisions regarding parenting, within these contexts. They are influenced by culture and by expectations in relation to their gender; accordingly, when discourses, objects, and practices are (re)produced in a certain way (or not), this is tied to lived experience (Griswold, 2012). These expectations, and their construction within a traditionally patriarchal society, should not be underestimated in an analysis of parenting behaviours.

What it means to be a "good father", and the enactment of masculinity through this role, can and has changed with social and cultural context. As Edley (2001) suggests, societal discourses that are privileged can influence the construction of subjectivities by showing which subject positions are valued and held as 'true'. Research of this nature has highlighted that men who live in differing cultural and social contexts do not experience fatherhood in the same way, and that this experience is likely to differ by factors such as race, class, disability, and location (Connell, 2005a; Pini & Conway, 2017; Roy & Dyson, 2010). Chowdhury (2013), for example, writes about fathering practices in South Asia which are often predicated on community, rather than family, ties. In the Australian context, Hammond (2010) notes that there are few positive images

of Indigenous men performing fathering, and this can have an impact upon expectations and performances of Indigenous fathering.

Perhaps of more relevance to the present research and its participants is research around white, middle-class fathers and their contextual practices. LaRossa (1997) and Milkie and Denny (2012) investigated how fatherhood was framed in popular magazines in the United States; men's roles within the family were framed differently depending on the socio-cultural context of the decade. Milkie and Denny (2012) reported that in the latter half of the twentieth century the frame turned toward nurturance, and expectations regarding fathers' emotional involvement increased (see also Marsiglio et al., 2013; Marsiglio & Roy, 2012). In the Australian context, Bell (2013) argues that although there is a cultural shift towards a more caring and nurturing fatherhood, ultimately traditionally masculine ideals of fatherhood continue to be idealised and portrayed in cultural products, such as magazines and advertisements. Miller and Nash (2016) argue that the shift in what is considered good fathering has particular implications for Australian fathers, where masculinity and fathering identity is strongly tied to breadwinning. The shift toward emphasising a nurturing, emotionally involved, and connected fatherhood propels men into a situation where they are encouraged to construct a parenting identity somewhat at odds with the traits of stoicism, independence, and control revered in hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 2005b). While masculinities can be plural and fluid (Coles, 2009; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005), the ideal of hegemonic masculinity and (re)productions of this through interactions, encourages men to construct their masculine identities in certain, privileged ways.

In particular, an Australian study of heterosexual partners conducted by Rose and colleagues (2015) noted that when attending medical appointments in the prenatal

period and also at the birth, professional staff spoke to and positioned men in such a way that conveyed their status as secondary parents. This positioning by medical staff, in combination with cultural expectations of masculinity, may contribute to discouraging men from engaging in the type of new fatherhood that is increasingly emphasised (see also Drew and Watters 2014). Further, in their study of Australian heterosexual couples, for example, Singleton and Maher (2005) termed the women in their research 'domestic managers' and the men 'compliant helpers'. The women took on responsibility not only for the majority of childcare (and household chores), but also for directing their male partners in this regard. Similarly, Riggs and Bartholomaeus (2018) found in their study of heterosexual couples living in South Australia, that the female partners took on double responsibility. They were responsible for both the majority of childcare and also for guiding their male partners in what, how, and when to do care work. Miller's (2011) findings in her study of Canadian couples echoed this idea, in that fathers framed themselves as 'helpers' and secondary parents, and distanced themselves from and/or re-appropriated their engagement in feminine spaces and behaviour (see also Borgkvist et al. 2018; Hrzenjak 2013).

For the most part, it appears that the opportunity to challenge gendered parenting norms is rarely seized, and traditional gender norms are often reinforced in the workplace, home, and medical and social settings, such that parents tend to fall back into gendered patterns of work and parenting after a baby is born (Miller 2011; Rose et al. 2015). However, Miller (2011) emphasises that 'opportunities to transgress normative ways of doing caring can also be refused or avoided, and/or explained through apparent incompetence, and so normative patterns of gendered behaviours continue' (2011, p. 1106). As we will argue, explaining men's lack of action or choices in relation to parenting in terms of their incompetence, or of mothers being inherently competent,

maintains the normality of current gendered patterns of parenting. To effectively shift these gendered patterns, structural enablers must exist (Miller, 2011; Pedulla & Thébaud, 2015).

In this vein, Shirani, Henwood and Coltart (2012) point out that the necessary provisions enabling men to be more involved fathers are often not available in public spaces in the UK, which reinforces ideas around men's incompetence in relation to caring for children, that 'the father alone is not seen as an appropriate carer for a young baby' (p. 282). In contrast, countries with social policies and provisions enabling men to take up the carer role, such as Sweden and Denmark, have higher numbers of men spending time with their children, as well as engaging in primary caregiving (Brandth & Kvande, 2016; Bünning, 2015; Craig & Mullan, 2010; Kaufman & Almqvist, 2017).

In summary, men are informed about their expected roles and the value placed on them by societal and institutional structures, and the ways in which fatherhood, and motherhood, is positioned through these structures (Marsiglio et al., 2013). Certain discourses and institutional actions convey to men that they are more valued when they engage in paid work than when they parent (Daly, 1996; Lupton & Barclay, 1997; Miller & Nash, 2016). Thus, even while expectations for fathering behaviour are changing, structural and institutional support for this behaviour may not be adequately shifting with it. For example, that the availability and monetary value of paternity leave in Australia, and numerous other countries, is minimal, works to convey to men that their role as fathers is less valued than their role as workers. It also encourages men to continue to view their fatherhood as inextricably linked to their ability to financially provide. Thus, certain discourses in regards to fathering and the (re)production of these

through institutional policies and interactions may influence the subjectivities that fathers see as acceptable.

<u>6.5 Method</u>

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with Australian fathers, conducted between August and December 2015. Participants were recruited through flyers distributed around shopping and sports centres, snowball sampling, and dissemination of the research by radio interviews, a newspaper article, and a local research organisation newsletter. Recruitment material called for 'Hands on Dads' aged 18 years or older, who were currently working, and had at least one child between the ages of 1 and 12 years old. The original research question focused on men's parenting and experiences of using (or not using) flexible working arrangements (Borgkvist et al., 2018). In this analysis, we focus on participants' constructions of parenting.

Fifteen men participated in the interviews, most identifying as Anglo-Saxon Australian, except two who identified as Italian-Australian and European-Australian, respectively. The participants were primarily middle class, and all had female partners with whom they were cohabiting, with all but one participant being married. Participants worked in a range of occupations across the public and private sectors, and their ages ranged from 31-52 years. The majority of their partners were engaged in some form of part-time work.

Discourse Analysis (Wetherell et al., 1987) was used to analyse transcripts of the interviews. Here, discourse analysis is applied as by Wetherell and colleagues (1987), whereby discourse refers to spoken, written, formal and informal interactions; language is seen as constructive and action-oriented, and, as such, it is not neutral but accomplishes certain things for the speaker. Analysis aimed to investigate the ideologies

underlying individuals' constructions of reality; this included the application of constructs such as interpretative repertoires and subject positions. Edley (2001) describes interpretative repertoires as coherent or understandable ways of discussing things, and defines the construct of subject positions as 'locations within a conversation' and 'the identities made relevant by specific ways of talking' (p. 210). Talk is viewed as performative and (re)productive in that discourses are considered both indicative of the subject positions available to speakers, and as able to assist in the maintenance or challenge of wider social and cultural processes and expectations (Ussher & Perz, 2015). Thus, analysis is based on established methods and theory, and extracts are provided to allow the reader to assess the validity of the analysis.

We would like to emphasise the importance of conducting qualitative research, and interviews in particular, with men. Wetherell and Edley's (2014) research discusses the ability of interviews and discourse analysis to elucidate the identity work that men can and often do to maintain accordance with hegemonic masculinity. Further, Chowdury (2017) wrote that interviews can provide spaces within which masculinities can be shored up, reinvented, and indeed constructed in relation to the interviewer themselves. Highlighting this identity work is imperative in identifying possible strategies for social change in relation to men and masculinities (see also Pini, 2009). In addition, Locke and Yarwood (2017) argue that the use of interviews and discourse analysis can assist in giving men their own voices in relation to parenting (see also Dolan & Coe, 2011).

Interviews were conducted by the first author and covered topics including parenting and housework arrangements, if and how participants had applied for and taken leave after the birth of a child, interactions with supervisors and co-workers, and

if and why participants were or were not currently using a flexible work arrangement. Interviews lasted between 39 to 110 minutes, and were recorded and transcribed verbatim by the first author. At the point of transcription all names were changed and names of workplaces were omitted to maintain confidentiality. Transcripts were then read, re-read and coded by searching for patterns of talk that recurred across and within the interviews. During the data collection and analysis process, the first author discussed aspects of the data, codes and themes with co-authors to consolidate preliminary ideas and analysis.

During analysis we identified that, rather than interrupting or challenging traditionally gendered ways of parenting, participants (re)produced dominant discourses regarding parenting abilities and roles. In the analysis below, we aim to illustrate the tension that fathers constructed in their talk regarding their parenting and work roles, and the spaces and ways in which these fathers were enabled and constrained in enacting a contemporary fathering identity. We have chosen to present the accounts of five participants, based upon the content and representativeness of their accounts, to allow for in-depth analysis. However, similar accounts, and particularly the recognition that fathers should be more involved, were seen across multiple interviews.

6.6 Results

Men who participated expressed a desire to be involved parents, but simultaneously gave varying accounts for not being as involved as they desired. In particular, we identified two competing interpretative repertoires within men's talk: men as aspiring to be equal parents, and men as subordinate or secondary parents. The coexistence of these two distinct interpretative repertoires suggests a tension between what fathers recognise they *should* be doing, and what they *are* doing, as parents.

Participants drew upon discourses which constituted the second repertoire, of men as secondary parents, more prominently in our data and this is reflected in the analysis.

Below, we demonstrate examples of these competing interpretative repertoires, while exploring three discursive strategies that fathers used to manage this tension or to account for not achieving equal parenting. These self-identified engaged fathers drew upon biological explanations for parenting behaviour, utilised discursive strategies which privileged their involvement in paid work, and emphasised the problematisation of active and involved fathering as explanations for them not being as involved as they expressed the desire to be.

6.6.1 Biological explanations for parenting behaviour

In accounting for their parenting behaviours, many participants drew upon a biological discourse. Whilst not a new discourse (see Locke & Yarwood, 2017; Rose et al., 2015), its presence and function in this context is noteworthy as it demonstrates its continued accessibility:

1	[T]he nappies, the housework and everything um, I really wanted to be a part of
2	all of that. There's um, there was a beautiful Michael Sherbon essay on fatherhood that
3	I read really early on that had a, that I really liked, he basically said that the piss, shit
4	and the vomit is the intimacy you can't have one without the other so if you're not there
5	for the piss and the shit and the vomit you can't, you won't have that intimacy you can't.
6	And I really believed that was true so I wanted to be changing just as many pooey
7	nappies as my wife and um, yeah, and you know trying to help out in the middle of the
8	night. Unfortunately I'm a massively heavy sleeper so my reaction time was always so

9   much slower than my wife's . . . I don't know if that's evolutionary or something, but I

10   wasn't very good at that (age 36, Researcher)

In lines one to eight, Larry engages with a repertoire in which he outlines the need for fathers to be involved, engaged parents, particularly when he emphasises that he wanted to change nappies and be involved in the hands-on work of parenting. His assertion that 'if you're not there for the piss and the shit and the vomit you won't have that intimacy' is reflective of the changing expectations for contemporary fathers to be involved in all aspects of caring for their newborn infant, and to form close relationships and bonds with their children (Hanlon, 2012; Miller & Nash, 2016). The inclusion of this repertoire in Larry's account indicates recognition of this expectation.

Subsequently, in lines nine to eleven, Larry draws upon a different repertoire, positioning him as a secondary parent, in relation to his wife. Specifically, he draws upon a biological discourse to account for his failure to engage in the active components of parenting an infant, suggesting that being 'a massively heavy sleeper' affected his reaction time and that this might be 'evolutionary'. There are two points to consider here. One is that Larry draws upon a biological explanation for his inability to perform these tasks, thus framing it as something out of his control. In addition, his concluding remark 'I wasn't very good at that' leaves no room to consider that those parenting behaviours may be learned, rather than biological or inherent to the mother. This provides a suitable account for Larry not undertaking these actions and not being as involved as he said he wanted to be, whilst the use of the word 'unfortunately' works to reinforce his stated desire to be so involved.

Where Larry says 'I wanted to be changing just as many pooey nappies as my wife' and 'trying to help out in the middle of the night' (lines 7 and 8), he positions

himself as an outsider, a helper, and as aspiring to meet a standard set by his wife. This highlights a tension and negotiation of identity for Larry—a stated need and want to be an involved father, ostensibly undermined by biological factors beyond his control, which account for his inability to accomplish this.

Within this extract, Larry takes up numerous subject positions which accomplish various things for him. In stating that 'I really wanted to be a part of all of that', Larry implies that he was not part of this, positioning himself as outside of or separate from this realm of behaviour, which has historically been undertaken by women—'the nappies, the housework and everything'. Although seemingly accessing the repertoire of involved parent which would incorporate these actions, the language used implicitly establishes a limit on his capacity to undertake these actions. In taking up this subject position, Larry positions his wife as the expert, the benchmark to which he compares his parenting behaviour. This positioning can be seen to reinforce the idea of women's natural ability and men's inability to parent. It could also be argued that, in assigning expert status to the mother, this discursive work reproduces an assumption that there is a 'right way' or a 'best way' to parent, and that only the best performer should do this.

Similarly, Carl described how he had enjoyed taking time off when his first child was born:

1   C: It was really nice to sort of have all of that bonding time you know while I wasn't
2   working, um that was nice, yep.
3   I: Mmm, yeah. So when you say bonding time what do you mean by that?
4   C: Um, generally just time spent with my daughter doing, just family things, so it might
5   be reading to her it might be um cooking with her it might be taking her to the museum

6   that sort of thing, um just generally time spent with my daughter (33, Administration

7   Officer)

Here, Carl engages with the discourse of father involvement, and establishes it as important. However, he also shows some hedging (see Machin and Mayr, 2012) when he says 'it was nice to *sort of* have all of that bonding time *you know*' (emphasis added). This hedging suggests that Carl may not have been entirely comfortable taking on that role, that aspect of parenting—with the implication that he was not entitled to perform parenting in the same way as the mother.

In this next section of Carl's speech, his seeming lack of entitlement becomes more apparent as he suggests that mothers have an immediate connection that fathers cannot have:

1   Especially sort of in the early um, early year or so, sort of getting to know her [his

2   daughter], and because I mean *it wasn't immediate for me that I actually liked having a*

3   *child in the house.* But I mean now obviously I wouldn't have it any other way but

4   certainly for the first few months I wasn't, *the connection wasn't there between me and*

5   *my daughter as you know it is with my wife and my daughter* (Carl, 33, Administration

6   Officer, italics added for emphasis)

Through this account, Carl identifies his wife as having an immediate and strong connection with their daughter. Although Carl does not explicitly describe this connection as biological, there is an implied imperative in his talk, whereby women, as opposed to men, like and want children and do not have to invest (as much) emotional work to bond with them. In addition, the activities that he suggests facilitated him

forming a connection, such as 'taking her to the museum' or 'cooking with her', are primarily those undertaken with older children. As with Larry's explanation above, this leaves no room for consideration that caring for and connecting with very young children may be learned behaviour.

In addition, Carl's suggestion that 'it wasn't immediate for me that I actually liked having a child in the house' accomplishes two things. First, as mentioned above, it implies that there is something innate, or biological, about the way in which women and children connect (despite there being a number of reasons why this may not be the case – see Miller, 2005); second, and in contrast, it constructs men as needing to get used to having children around, as not immediately connecting with children. In combination with hedging that can be seen when he describes spending time with his daughter this suggests that although he is accessing the discourse of involved parent and arguably is contributing to the repertoire of men as equal parents, he is positioning himself as a secondary parent. This undercuts his capacity to parent in the way he appears to recognise that he should, and positions his partner as the more competent carer/parent. Again, it can be seen that this tension is negotiated and managed through an account reliant on biology—something outside of Carl's control.

Overall, these participants' accounts demonstrated a discernible tension in expectations and ability to be an involved father, which was evident within most interviews. In addition, it is apparent in their accounts that biological explanations reinforcing notions of gendered expertise remain readily accessible.

6.6.2 Inhibited by paid work

As discussed, in our interviews, fathers repeatedly demonstrated their recognition of a tension between what they *should* be doing and what they *were* doing as parents. A second pattern in participants' accounts of parenting related to descriptions of the impact that involvement in paid work had on their ability to be active, involved fathers. For example, in the below extract, Ross, who has two adult and two young children, responds to a question about what working part-time following the birth of his now older children meant to him. Ross now works full-time and does not spend time with his two young children in this same way:

1   Mmm, yeah it was awesome. Yeah, ah it gave me an opportunity to um, I suppose not

2   to be so distant, to be a part of what was going on and to, *(exhales)* I suppose um, what

3   I feel with the other the two younger children is that Mum is still the centre of the world,

4   'cos when things go wrong they go to Mum. But my two older children, because I was

5   there a lot more and as a part-time worker and a part-time parent that wasn't so distinct,

6   so when they were upset, coming to see Dad was part of what happens and it wasn't that

7   striking difference that I feel now, 'cos you're, you're, you're there and you're there

8   picking up and [doing] drop-offs from school and kindy, being there all day with them

9   (46, Scientific Manager)

Similar to Larry and Carl, Ross establishes up-front that involved parent is the preferred position, both through identifying it as 'awesome' and articulating a wish 'not to be so distant'. Ross suggests that he was 'a part of what was going on' with his two older children but with his younger two 'mum is still the centre of the world'. The implication here is that not being involved may have a negative influence on the

relationship a father develops with his children. In the third line of the extract, for example, Ross speaks of the distance that he feels from his two younger children as opposed to his two older children, suggesting a sense of loss and pain, in not having the same kind of relationship with them. He establishes this through his absence from being 'part of what was going on' and through there being 'a striking difference that I feel now'. In contrasting these two experiences, Ross appears to suggest that working full-time means you cannot form an influential bond with your children.

The use of particular words and language by Ross works to position him as a secondary parent, and thus implicitly to position his wife as the primary caregiver. In the first line of Ross' extract, it can be seen that Ross hesitates in his speech and uses non-committal language when he says 'an opportunity to um, I suppose'. This hesitation suggests, as Carl's hedging did, that Ross may not have been comfortable taking on (or talking about) this more involved aspect of parenting, that he did not know how to explain it. His use of the term 'part-time parent' also suggests the notion that involvement in paid work might interrupt the performance of the parenting role, and vice versa. In the context of constructions of parenting, this is an interesting notion—it implies that you cannot be a full-time parent and a full-time paid worker simultaneously; it gives the sense that these are mutually exclusive roles with resources which cannot be used concurrently when responding to the demands of each.

Perhaps relatedly, Ross' implicit positioning of his wife as the primary caregiver suggests that he has the option of whether to take on this position, while his wife does not. This positioning works to maintain a view of women in general as most suitable in relation to caregiving and is reflective of a traditional perspective of work and parenting. Similarly, Ross suggests that working part-time 'gave me an opportunity' to not be so

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distant. This choice of words assigns agency elsewhere, and does not position Ross as actively making the choice to work part-time; this positioning could suggest that Ross is aware of the cultural problematisation of men stepping away from full-time work, hence his hesitation to commit to it in his speech. This subject position, of wanting to maintain a connection to paid work, became clear when Ross later articulated the below:

1   [T]he time that you have with your younger children is very small . . . what I said
2   to [my partner] was that you know I feel quite comfortable with you either wanting not
3   to work or work part-time because it's a short window of time that you get to spend
4   some pretty crucial years with the two children . . . we're fortunate that I'm full-time
5   employed and we're able to do that (46, Scientific Manager)

Here Ross appears to draw upon the discourse of father as worker/provider, and emphasise traditional parenting roles. When he says 'we're fortunate that I'm full-time employed and we're able to do that', this works to suggest that this is the most desirable option for fathers—to enable the mother to stay at home should she choose. At the same time, this glosses over the idea of choice for the father not to work—an example of the taken-for-granted, and unquestioned. Through this statement, Ross positions himself as worker, and work as his priority. This description also allows Ross and his partner to take up subject positions which are concomitant with the idea that mothers are better at care work, which provides a suitable account for fathers' lack of involvement. Ross privileges his involvement in paid work, while simultaneously using this to account for his inhibited involvement with his two younger children. In effect, this discursive strategy contributes to the repertoire of men as secondary parents.

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It can be seen here that the tension in competing repertoires of parenting were managed by emphasising the importance of involvement in paid work. However, as will be demonstrated below, the ability of fathers to privilege parenting is often structurally constrained, which may contribute to fathers' management of parenting and work tensions in certain ways.

6.6.3 Institutional and Cultural Problematisation of Involved Fathering

Through analysis, we noted that participants regularly cited workplace culture, Human Resources policies, and information available to men regarding their options for leave and flexibility, to problematise their enactment of active, involved fathering. Participants described that they often faced institutional constraints when they were attempting to take leave or find out leave options available to them at work. However, in acknowledging these constraints, participants also engaged them to explain their lack of time spent at home or engaging in care work. For example, while recounting his experience of trying to take leave after the birth of his child, Mike expands upon a comment he made about there being 'a particular culture' within his workplace:

1   [M]aybe it's more um a perception but certainly and it might be [my perception] might

2   be borne from the experience I had when I did wanna take leave around the birth of my

3   child, that um maybe for men there's less of a less support for men wanting to do . . .

4   ahh, perhaps child care arrangements or . . . to take that time off around the birth of the

5   child like it's kind of up to you to work out . . . bit of a gender bias towards women

6   taking time rather than, than men perhaps (40, Program Officer)

Here Mike states that, within his workplace, men are less supported to take time off work for family reasons than are women. The implication is that men will work and

women will care—although in sharing this account Mike conveys that he does not think this should be the case. Thus, he is drawing on a discourse of active parenting as preferable for men, contributing to the repertoire of equal parenting, while simultaneously accounting for why it is difficult to achieve. For example, it is portrayed as difficult for men to take time off without institutional support. Mike's statement that 'it's kind of up to you to work out' suggests that the individual is responsible for sourcing information about and applying for leave, rather than the organisation taking on this responsibility. Further, within this extract there are ideas which speak to the tension in these competing repertoires of parenting: first, that within workplaces it is expected/unquestioned that women will take time off, while for men it is more unusual; second, that men should want to take time off when their children are born. Men's active parenting, and familial responsibilities, is problematised by unsupportive workplaces, and men's claims to be active, involved parents are thus de-legitimised. It is implicit that they are more valued as workers, and, thus, it is more suitable for them to fulfil the role of secondary parent.

Aspects of Mike's speech further suggest that he is taking up certain subject positions which enable him to manage the tension present in his account. Throughout the above extract, Mike uses a great deal of hedging language. In the first line the use of the words 'maybe' and 'um' indicate a hesitancy to be deliberate in his speech, to purposefully articulate that his workplace is unsupportive in relation to his taking time off. The use of 'um a perception' indicates that he is hesitant to name his experience as fact. This hesitation could be interpreted to function in such a way that it allows Mike to avoid challenging the institution's role in creating and maintaining the normative gendered expectations he is discussing—to avoid challenging the status quo, because it might just be 'a perception' rather than something tangible. In saying that 'it might be

borne from his experience' Mike's behaviour is individualised and provides a platform for him to engage these discursive strategies. These strategies work to shore up Mike's subject position of ideal worker (Acker, 1990), and allow him to negotiate this subject position with that of involved father, by providing an explanation for his inability to be as involved as he would like. It is also possible that, rather than being a part of the process of identity negotiation, the use of these distancing strategies may reflect Mike orienting to the gender of the (female) interviewer. This may have had an impact on his willingness to be forthright about these experiences, and to locate them within a structure of bias within the workplace as opposed to his individual observation.

The same kind of talk can be seen in the following extract from Carl:

1   I think she [Carl's Manager] is in a position where she wants her workers to be happy

2   but she also is aware that you know we're quite understaffed and if somebody's taking

3   leave then that's putting sort of more strain on, on um the office as a whole so . . . I sort

4   of see why she would sort of suggest to me to move my [annual] leave rather than

5   looking in to other options for parental leave (33, Administration Assistant)

In this extract, Carl draws upon the idea that it is acceptable for workplaces to expect employees to be dedicated to work, and to privilege work over family. Carl does not challenge this in his account, which allows it to remain an obstacle to his taking parental leave. This failure to challenge his organisation's expectations of him in his speech may function in a similar way to Mike, in that it provides a suitable explanation for Carl not being as involved in home life as he could be. He needs to maintain a connection to work to provide for his family, and if work will not support his efforts to be actively involved then it is out of his control. Further, Carl does not problematise the

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institution for placing these expectations on their employees. He could question, for example, why he and also his manager are taking responsibility for the organisations' decision not to employ enough staff, but he does not. Considering this further, Carl's decision not to problematise the institution points to an unquestioned truth; it is telling that even though Carl (and his family) are adversely affected by the organisation's decision not to employ more staff, responsibility is still not assigned to the organisation. Rather, responsibility appears to be diffused and the situation is presented as 'just the way things are'—whereby the organisation continues to have its needs and goals met while the employee compromises. Consequently, with organisational responsibility remaining unnamed, there is no entity to call upon for change.

Finally, outside of workplaces, many fathers mentioned being made to feel unwelcome or questioned within spaces that traditionally have been reserved for mothers. Indeed, participants who took their children to playgroups, kindergarten, and other spaces typically considered feminine domains reported often being the only fathers there and described feeling unwelcome and uncomfortable:

1 Yeah oh very much so, ah you know not so much as the kids grew older . . . ah with
2 sports and things like that but certainly in the early days . . . I remember going to ah an
3 event at my children's kindy and being the only father there and the mothers almost
4 being a bit uncomfortable or wary, well maybe that was just my perception mind you,
5 um, but it wasn't a comfortable um experience . . . I don't know that I felt overly
6 welcome (Phil, 51, Social Worker)

Phil discussed here how feeling unwelcome impacted upon the activities that he engaged in with his children. It is telling that he felt most comfortable and did not perceive an adverse reaction from other parents 'as the kids grew older . . . ah with sports and things like that'. These kinds of reactions/interactions work to reproduce ideas around acceptable, and expected, parenting behaviours from men (and women). The discourses being engaged in these extracts suggest that, for men, activities which encourage competition, strength, and control—which could be seen as antithetical to the femininely framed care work—are appropriate avenues with which they can engage and bond with their children. As Harrington (2006) and Thompson (1999) note, engagement with sports and other competitive activities allows fathers to spend time with their children in a way which is socially acceptable for men, where they are able to engage with masculine ideals and distance themselves from feminine forms of care and intimacy.

These accounts suggest that parenting is (still) gendered, and, thus, for fathers some forms of active parenting are problematised while others are socially/culturally acceptable (see also, Doucet, 2006; Locke & Yarwood, 2017); however the above demonstrates that men may engage discursive strategies which problematise involved/equal parenting in order to explain their lack of involvement. The ready availability of these discursive strategies and subject positions suggests that, for men, their invocation presents the most socially acceptable way to resolve the tension between parenting and work—rather than to name and challenge a lack of organisational support and/or the problematisation of their active parenting. What this accomplishes is a continued contribution to the repertoire of men as secondary, rather than equal, parents.

6.7 Discussion/Conclusion

In this paper, we have demonstrated how fathers in paid employment may negotiate tension in evolving expectations in relation to work and parenting. We have further shown how these two roles might be managed by fathers, and how the repertoires, discourses, and subject positions engaged by fathers (and mothers and institutions alike) may work to reproduce gendered patterns and expectations.

The juxtaposition of evolving expectations in relation to work and parenting roles leaves fathers in a difficult position. Whilst required to meet changing expectations regarding their level and type of parental involvement, the accounts presented, and previous research, suggest that fathers are typically not provided with the cultural and institutional support required for them to achieve this kind of fathering (Hunter, Riggs, et al., 2017; Kaufman & Almqvist, 2017; Locke & Yarwood, 2017; Marsiglio et al., 2013; Pedulla & Thébaud, 2015; Suwada, 2017a). However, in engaging the above discourses and choosing not to challenge these barriers, the accounts deployed by fathers maintained traditional, gendered parenting roles while simultaneously assigning blame for their lack of involvement elsewhere.

Institutional culture is powerful and can be influential in individuals' behaviour and everyday decisions, actions, and subject positions (Dolan, 2014; Drew & Watters, 2014; Griswold, 2012; Marsiglio, 2008). Participants recognised and discussed structural constraints as having an impact on their ability to be involved fathers, but these structural constraints were primarily used to account for their inability to be as involved as evolving norms and expectations dictated. Invoking an explanation of structural constraints externalises, and absolves in a sense, individual responsibility—because it appears outside of their control. This distancing from responsibility and control in relation to involved parenting may not seem surprising when it is considered

that, while father involvement has come to be idealised, it requires fathers to step away from and reduce their connection to a socially and objectively/publicly valued role, traditionally associated with masculinity—and into one associated with femininity, which is trivialised and undervalued (Fisher & Tronto, 1990).

This notwithstanding, discourses of fathers as involved parents were drawn upon in the presented extracts. As Edley (2001) might describe, the use of these discourses suggests that an ideological shift in the rhetoric of fathers has occurred and is acknowledged by fathers. This way of talking about fathering, and the voicing of a desire to be more involved, appears more readily available and acceptable now than in previous generations. That participants felt a need to account for *not* engaging in these behaviours does support the idea that this expectation is becoming more salient.

Further, as Elliott (2016) suggested, when men engage in care, caring masculine identities can then further develop (see also Hanlon, 2012; Lee & Lee, 2016). Recognition of this expectation may provide a basis for fathers to increase their active involvement in parenting and incorporate this into their masculine identities (though, as Hunter, Riggs, et al., 2017 suggest, what this might actually mean for care work requires further investigation because feminine work is often reappropriated by men). If we also consider the findings of Rehel (2014), Miller (2011), and Wall (2014) that fathers who are engaged in caregiving in the early stages of an infant's life are more likely to remain involved parents, and to see caregiving as a learned rather than inherent behaviour, this recognition presents a promising move toward change in father involvement.

However, fathers' enactment of involved fathering may be hindered through the problematisation of involved fathering in workplaces and day to day interactions more broadly. Involved fathering appeared to be affirmed when fathers engaged in activities

with links to masculinity, such as taking their children to and coaching sports, as well as financially providing for them. Other researchers have observed that this works to reinforce the kinds of parenting behaviours and activities that men and women are encouraged and rewarded for doing (Coltrane, 1996; Connell, 2005a; Lupton & Barclay, 1997). In order for parenting expectations to evolve, and to become less gendered, the ways that mothering and fathering roles are recognized and the value that is attributed to them needs to evolve, as do the ways that women and men are valued within the workplace. Support from workplaces is required for the choice to privilege family over work to be normalised for men; this support is likely to result from broader cultural changes in norms around parenting and work. These factors influence each other (Griswold, 2012; Locke & Yarwood 2017; Miller & Nash 2016).

Further, when considering the problematisation of fathers' involved parenting by institutions, Griswold (2012) suggests that just as institutional culture can influence individuals, individuals can influence institutional culture and contribute to a shift in norms and expectations. The discourses these participants engaged to account for their lack of involvement reflect the most readily available discourses and point to the resources men and women have available to them to contribute to changes in norms. From a broader perspective, it is evident that in the Australian policy climate, resources have inherently privileged a traditional narrative in relation to parenting and work, and continue to do so (Brennan, 2011). It seems that the ability of fathers to incorporate the spheres of work and home, and for fathers to truly be more involved, requires further social change, normalisation, and policy support (see also Johansson and Klinth, 2008; Kaufman and Almqvist, 2017; Suwada, 2017).

It cannot be ignored, however, that the men who participated in this research did recognise a gap between fathering ideals and what they were doing in practice, and they chose not to act upon it. Again, it can be seen that with fathering ideals evolving faster than masculinities are changing, men are left with a lot to lose by pushing beyond the accepted boundaries of masculinity in order to meet these new ideals (Connell, 2005a). It appears from these accounts that masculine identity, in Australia at least, remains very closely tied to financial provision. In this sense, it does not matter that they are failing to perform this new fathering ideal—they are still engaging in and performing an acceptable, valued form of masculinity, and of fathering. Similar to the findings here, both Riggs and Bartholomaeus (2018) and Singleton and Maher (2005) found that the Australian fathers in their studies were performing new, expected fatherhood ideals, but only to an extent. They were, for example, performing tasks which seemingly proved their idealised fathering identity—changing nappies, feeding, and in some cases assisting with household chores.

However, the male participants in these studies still privileged their engagement in paid work, by positioning their primary role within the family as the breadwinner, and, in many cases, expecting their female partners to schedule their own time (including caregiving and paid work) around the fathers' engagement with paid work. In Riggs and Bartholomaeus (2018) study both their male and female participants engaged with these ideas. Given that involvement in paid work featured so prominently in these accounts, and the present research, it could be that mens' continued engagement with discourses of father as provider maintains the legitimacy and value of this performance of masculinity, while simultaneously inhibiting progress toward an evolved masculinity which integrates care work to the same degree.

The research presented here involved heterosexual fathers currently in paid work, who were primarily middle class, and of Anglo-Saxon descent. These men fit in to a specific privileged group and are not representative of other classes and ethnicities of men and fathers. For example, Shows and Gerstel (2009) demonstrated that working class and upper class fathers may negotiate parenting and work tensions differently (see also Dolan 2014; Connell 2005a). There is also a dearth of research focussing on individuals with different gender and sexual orientations and/or different familial structures, and families in relation to negotiations of parenting and work identities generally; we acknowledge that our research, which focuses on heterosexual participants, may reproduce heteronormative assumptions regarding the topic at hand. Furthermore, we reiterate that these are the dominant patterns of speech we identified in the data; others may have identified different points. We also suggest that future research might consider the impact of irregular work, or 'gig jobs', and the rising popularity of the gig economy (see Stewart & Stanford, 2017) on men's decisions and positioning in relation to parenting.

Through demonstration of how, through language, gendered patterns of work and parenting can be maintained and remain unchallenged, the findings presented here add to the growing body of research in this area. How fathers choose to account for their lack of involvement in certain aspects of parenting has consequences, both at the individual and societal levels. The analysis presented in this paper indicates that men's use of biological explanations for parenting behaviour, the positioning of themselves as secondary parents and their female partners as primary caregivers/experts, and continual engagement with discourses privileging traditional connections to paid work remain prominent factors influencing men's parenting. In effect, women's positions as primary caregivers are arguably maintained through men's negotiation of masculine identity and

its interaction with work and parenting. While small changes in parenting roles and expectations do seem to be occurring, evident in the changing expectations of father involvement and acknowledgement of these expectations by fathers, as Connell (2003, p. 17) suggests, 'the gender order does not blow away at a breath'.

Chapter 7: The continuing influence of paid work on the construction of fathering identity: A comparison of primary caregiving fathers and working fathers

The previous two chapters highlighted (among other things) how influential paid work remains in the expression and performance of not only masculine identity but also fathering identity—and how this might impact upon men's desire and willingness to utilise flexible working arrangements for family reasons. The next chapter, which has been submitted in manuscript form to the journal *Sex Roles*, came about as a result of a joint conference presentation with Dr Sarah Hunter, who was at the time of the presentation also a PhD student. She was investigating primary caregiving fathers, how they constructed their identities, and how they were represented in parenting texts and other forms of media for her PhD research. We realised that, despite my participants being working fathers, and the fathers who were subjects in her parenting texts being primary caregiving fathers, they spoke about and positioned paid work in the same ways. This was compelling to us and we thought it revealed a great deal about how influential paid work is in relation to fathering.

In this chapter, myself and Dr Hunter combined our research in order to provide a comparison of how primary caregiving fathers and working fathers talked about paid work. As such, we combined our data sets—my interviews with working fathers and Dr Hunter's parenting texts. Both of these explored the experiences of fathers on the topics of parenting and paid work. We then re-analysed the data using thematic discourse analysis.

Statement of Authorship

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Name of Principal Author (Candidate)	Ashlee Borgkvist
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Overall percentage (%)	45
Certification:	This paper reports on original research I conducted during the period of my Higher Degree by Research candidature and is not subject to any obligations or contractual agreements with a third party that would constrain its inclusion in this thesis. I am the primary author of this paper.
Signature	Date 03/09/2019

Co-Author Contributions

By signing the Statement of Authorship, each author certifies that:

    i.   the candidate's stated contribution to the publication is accurate (as detailed above);

    ii.   permission is granted for the candidate in include the publication in the thesis; and

    iii.   the sum of all co-author contributions is equal to 100% less the candidate's stated contribution.

Name of Co-Author	Dr Sarah Hunter
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Contribution to the Paper	Provided comments on draft of the manuscript, reviewed and approved final draft.
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7.2 Abstract

Cultural and social views about fathers' roles have changed significantly over the past few decades, and these changes have led to claims that gender roles, and particularly fathers' roles, are evolving. However, fathers are influenced by a range of cultural and social processes; notably, this includes the expectation that they will financially provide for their families and adhere to behavioural patterns associated with hegemonic masculinity. Through analysis of both semi-structured interviews and parenting texts aimed at primary caregiving fathers, this paper argues that in practice the fathering role has not evolved as much as has been suggested. In particular, the connection between fatherhood and involvement in paid work remains pervasive, as does the expectation that men will behave in ways concomitant with hegemonic masculinity. It is suggested that men's further involvement in parenting care may provide a necessary destabilisation of masculinity and further incorporation of caregiving into masculine identities.

Keywords: primary caregiving fathers, working fathers, masculinity, care work, paid work.

7.3 Introduction

The past few decades have seen significant change in relation to expectations surrounding men and women's work and home responsibilities (Rochlen, Suizzo, McKelley, & Scaringi, 2008). Specifically, women are increasingly involved in the labour market and men are more involved in house and care work than at any time previously in modern society (Latshaw & Hale, 2016). These changes have led to claims that gender roles are evolving and the role of fathers now includes a more nurturing aspect (Hunter, Augoustinos, & Riggs, 2017).

Understandings of fatherhood are socially constructed (Burr, 1995). Thus, notions of what it means to be a "good" father do not exist outside of social and cultural processes; in fact, they exist through these processes (Lupton & Barclay, 1997). Historically, ideas of what it means to be a "good" man and father have largely been informed by hegemonic masculinity (Coltrane, 1996; Connell, 2005b), in which men are required to be tough, strong, and emotionless. Hegemonic masculinity has long construed men as, first and foremost, financial providers within the family (Hanlon, 2012; Medved, 2016; Whelan & Lally, 2002).

In this paper we argue that, despite the socio-cultural belief that fathers are and want to be, more involved parents, research consistently demonstrates that fathers are not as involved as discourses of involved parenting would suggest (Baxter & Smart, 2011; Gray, 2013; McGill, 2014; Stevens, 2015). Comparisons of two groups of fathers, those who remain involved in paid work and those who are stay-at-home-primary caregivers, will assist in making this argument.

Cultural notions of fatherhood and masculinity have an impact on men's behaviours and choices in relation to parenting and work. Men's adherence to the requirement to be a financial provider arguably can be seen in the long work hours that many men undertake around the world (Gregory & Milner, 2009; OECD, 2018), and in the different work patterns amongst males and females once they have children: most men continue to work full-time, while their female partners tend to either not go back to paid work or to return to work part-time within about two years (Coltrane, 1996; Huerta et al., 2013; Strazdins et al., 2017; Williams, 2010). In particular, Australian men work some of the longest hours in the Western world, and research indicates that when men become fathers their work hours actually increase (Baxter, 2013b; Coltrane et al., 2013).

Social and organisational barriers to men's greater participation in family life exist; in particular, a strong association between masculinity, fatherhood, and financial provision prescribes a social norm for men's participation in paid work, and, in contrast, women's responsibility for child care (Baxter, 2018; Baxter & Smart, 2011; Borgkvist, Moore, et al., 2018; Connell, 2005b; Craig & Mullan, 2012; Halford, 2006; Ridgeway, 1997; Williams, 2010).

Arguably, fathers who step away from full-time paid work and assume the primary caregiving role are still not positioned as legitimate caregivers. Previous research demonstrates how fathers are rarely the focus of parenting texts with mothers commonly positioned as having primary responsibility for caregiving (Fleming & Tobin, 2005; Lupton & Barclay, 1997; Sunderland, 2000, 2006). Broadly, research demonstrates how fathers are frequently positioned as part-time parents or helpers with less competence than mothers, few caregiving responsibilities, and are predominantly positioned in full-time paid work (Fleming & Tobin, 2005; Sunderland, 2000, 2006; Vuori, 2009; Wall & Arnold, 2007).

Certain expectations, such as fathers attending the birth of a child and taking some time off after the baby is born, have certainly changed and widely mean fathers are more involved in these aspects of a child's life than was the case in previous years (Dolan, 2014; Lupton & Barclay, 1997). It has been observed, moreover, that when men incorporate caring into their identities, this can lead to long term changes in the amount of caregiving that they are involved in and the type of caring that they do (Brady et al., 2017; Brandth & Kvande, 2018c; Miller, 2011; Rehel, 2014; Wall, 2014). Other cultural expectations and norms, however, dictate that men demonstrate their masculinity as fathers, and taking time off or choosing to reduce working hours to be more involved in

caregiving is still seen as feminine behaviour (Coltrane, 2010; Miller, 2011). It is therefore something men, for the most part, are compelled to avoid.

In addition, fathers' exclusion from policy and discourses around parenting can reinforce hegemonic notions of fathering and mothering, and lead to the reproduction of gendered roles within families (Brennan, 2011; Cosson & Graham, 2012; Miller & Nash, 2016; Pfitzner, Humphreys, & Hegarty, 2018; Rose et al., 2015). However, policy and legislation can also be used to change culture, through encouraging and providing practical support for engagement in certain behaviours and actions. Such change can be seen in Scandinavian countries, where policies have created an environment in which a high percentage of fathers take long periods of parental leave (Almqvist, 2008; Brandth & Kvande, 2016).

Nonetheless, researchers in Scandinavia—upheld as proactive regarding men and families—note that, even where parental policies are very inclusive of and specifically target fathers, hegemonic notions of fathering identity being tied to paid work are still apparent (Brandth & Kvande, 1998, 2016, 2018b; Haas & Hwang, 2019b). This can impact upon fathers being involved in caregiving, and the choices that they make in relation to parenting and paid work. Ultimately, men's choices to be involved in caregiving remain incompatible or at least problematic within hegemonic masculinity (Coltrane et al., 2013; Hunter, Riggs, et al., 2017).

In the Australian context, a pro-natalist (the promotion of child-bearing as socially desirable) discourse in relation to parenting has historically been prevalent, and national policy has reflected this approach (Brennan, 2011). This emphasis has meant that policy and practical support for parenting has been focused on mothers rather than fathers, and it was not until 2013 that a paid parental leave policy was introduced

specifically targeting fathers (Baxter, 2013b; Brennan, 2011; Dreyfus, 2013). Further, Australian men's parenting has long been heavily informed by the masculinist values of stoicism and control over one's time and emotions (Connell, 2005a, 2005b; Miller & Nash, 2016; Pfitzner et al., 2018; Stevens, 2015), derived from broader cultural valuing of hegemonic masculinity. In the context of caregiving, these masculinist values are inherently challenged.

The studies reported above demonstrate the different ways that fathers are positioned in research and in popular culture. However, it is timely and important for research to examine the discourses that are made available to stay-at-home fathers and fathers who remain in paid work to account for their respective parenting positions. Specifically, the current paper will examine the influence of paid work expectations on these two groups of fathers' identity negotiation. As will be demonstrated below, even though cultural expectations of father's engagement in caregiving are changing, it is often difficult for fathers engaged in paid work to develop a caregiving identity. This is so for both groups of fathers, even though their level of involvement in caregiving differs.

7.4 Method

The data for this paper were initially gathered and analysed separately by the first and second authors, and these data sets then combined and re-analysed. The data on primary caregiving fathers came from nine parenting texts (see Appendix E) written for primary caregiving fathers. This data source was selected as it is important for research to examine popular culture and the role it plays in the production of discourses that men must navigate (Lupton & Barclay, 1997). Books were selected if they were published between the years 2000-2014. Given the focus on contemporary fatherhood,

books published prior to 2000 were not included for analysis as research indicates that the 21st century has seen considerable change in Australian fathering identities and practices (Dempsey & Hewitt, 2012). The nine books selected reflect the most recent and popular published for primary caregiving fathers, as identified via rankings and searches of Amazon.com. Books were excluded if they were fiction, and were simply a narrative or recount of a personal story (i.e., they needed to be instructive in some way). The sample analysed included books published in Australia, UK, and USA.

The data on working fathers were collected through semi-structured interviews conducted with fathers in Adelaide, South Australia between August and December 2015. Recruitment material called for 'Hands on Dads' aged 18 years or older, who were currently working, and had at least one child between the ages of 1 and 12 years old. Participants were asked a range of questions relating to their parenting and experiences of using or not using flexible working arrangements. Fifteen men participated with most identifying as Anglo-Saxon Australian. All participants were in heterosexual relationships, and were primarily middle class. Participants worked in a range of occupations across the public and private sectors, and their ages ranged from 33-52 years. Extracts from fathers who were, or had previously been, working part-time to incorporate caregiving and also those working full-time were utilised. Pseudonyms were used for all participants.

The first and second authors saw utility in combining their datasets investigating constructions of fathering identity, in order to make a comparison between the experiences of the different groups of fathers elucidated in each—primary caregiving fathers and fathers engaged in paid work. While the data sets make use of two different types of data—textual and interviews—the epistemological issues and concerns, and the

theoretical approaches of each study were almost identical. Combining these datasets also allows for a novel analysis, enabling a consideration of comparative themes. In addition, each set of data provides first-hand accounts from the fathers themselves.

The present research thus provides a way to compare these two groups of fathers, and through this comparison of language relating to fathers in paid work with fathers assuming a primary caregiving role, we were able to develop a deeper understanding of identity negotiation and construction, and dominant discourses of fathering. When considering fathering, fathering identity, and paid work, using a combination of these different sources of data with a focus on the lived experiences of the fathers provides a way to compare the similarities of them (Bazeley, 2012). In addition, as Patton (1999) noted, the use of multiple data sources in qualitative inquiry can assist in developing a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon being investigated, and may present as an effective way in which to answer a particular question (see also Meth & McClymont, 2009 for a discussion about the merits of qualitative mixed-methods and researching men).

Analyses of each separate dataset have been published elsewhere (Borgkvist, Eliott, et al., 2018; Borgkvist, Moore, et al., 2018; Hunter, Augoustinos, et al., 2017; Hunter, Riggs, et al., 2017). For the present paper, thematic analysis, drawing on aspects of discourse analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Potter & Wetherell, 1987), was utilised in order to explore accounts of contemporary fathering. The first and second authors thematically coded both datasets as one, identifying the dominant themes and specific extracts which exemplified these themes. These extracts were analysed in depth to draw out the complex rhetorical work that shows how paid work specifically, and hegemonic masculinity more broadly, continues to influence constructions of fathering identity, as

well as the discourses available to each group of fathers regarding their parenting and work experiences. This in-depth analysis allowed an exploration of dominant constructions and understandings of masculinities and fathering, in order to evaluate the ways in which contemporary fathering is currently understood and (re)produced by fathers. Specifically, analysis focused on the functions and consequences (Edwards & Potter, 1992; Potter, 1996; Potter & Wetherell, 1987) of the ways in which fathers are constructed and positioned, both by others and themselves, often in reference to particular norms and expectations of fathering and masculinities. Through analysis and comparison of both datasets, this paper will demonstrate that, despite evolving expectations that include men more within caregiving, there remain social and cultural expectations which dictate that men adhere to hegemonic masculinity through continuing to construct their fathering identity in relation to paid work.

7.5 Results

Three dominant themes, along with discursive constructions within them, were identified across the data sets and are presented here. These themes demonstrate the complex and contradictory assumptions and constructions of fathering in the language of these two groups of men. However, they also demonstrate that whether fathers are primary caregivers or are involved in paid work, social and cultural pressures and expectations that fathers will financially provide endure. The themes we identified are: ongoing expectations that fathers undertake full-time paid work; fathers' identities as financial providers; and, fathers' renegotiating hegemonic masculinity.

7.5.1 Expectations that fathers undertake full-time paid work

The first theme identified is that there are pervasive expectations that fathers should engage in paid work, though this presents in two distinct ways. First, there is a

cultural expectation that men should engage in full-time paid work and not reduce their work hours to factor in family responsibilities when they become fathers. Second, this cultural norm underpins an expectation that fathers will dedicate themselves to paid work despite family responsibilities. These expectations continue to have influence due to the fact that paid work continues to have greater social value and social capital than caregiving.

The expectations around fathers engaging in full-time paid work (and, often, more than full-time work hours), is generally understood as the ideal worker norm which fathers continue to uphold due to women historically being responsible for childcare (Acker, 1990). Even though women's workforce participation has increased (Baxter, 2013b), this expectation that men will dedicate themselves to full-time work has not diminished, and was evident in the ways in which working fathers in our research spoke about workplaces, work roles, and their use of flexible arrangements. For example, in the below extract Kieran describes his workplace to illustrate how women such as 'Sally' are more likely to be considered for and provided with opportunities to accommodate their caregiving responsibilities, while fathers (specifically himself) are not:

[W]e have sites up in central Queensland so they're a bit remote and often you have to go up to sites to meet someone . . . um so we're all on this big project and um we were all kind of distributed around to different sites and everyone was really conscious of Sally who had care responsibilities with her child right, um and saying 'oh Sally you know we'll make sure we'll put you at this site because um, you know, because you have to make sure you can get there and get back to your children', and all that sort of stuff, and but no one mentioned anything for me (Kieran, 39, Communication Specialist)

The assumption here is that men will have no caregiving responsibilities, and therefore workplace flexibility, in terms of where, when, and how long they are expected to work, is neither required nor offered to them. Furthermore, Kieran's use of "you know" twice, could be argued to be Kieran struggling to explain this implicit expectation

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(see Machin & Mayr, 2012), as it is frequently unspoken. Through using "you know" Kieran is able to confirm that the interviewer understands without an explanation. This evidences the cultural understanding of this pervasive expectation on fathers to be full-time workers, and not responsible for the primary caregiving; it is taken as a shared, unspoken and unquestioned understanding.

This cultural expectation was also evident in parenting texts written by and for primary caregiving fathers when speaking of a father's parenting role:

"I had always seen myself as the one bringing home the bacon and acting more like a deputy to the sheriff when it came to parenting" (Kulp, 2013, p. 167)

In this extract Kulp describes how he expected to be a financial provider and not be responsible for primary caregiving. The way in which he describes "always seeing himself" is indicative of how deeply embedded the cultural assumption is of a father's role as financial provider. This further evidences how fathers are not expected to be responsible for caregiving and this requires no justification. However, Kulp is violating this expectation of fathers to be involved in paid work as he has assumed the primary caregiver role. Therefore, he works to mitigate this violation by acknowledging the cultural assumption and outlines his original intention to adhere to the expectation to engage in paid work.

Not only is there an implicit cultural expectation that fathers are aware of and frequently orient toward, there are also explicit and verbalised expectations on fathers. Consider the following extract:

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"The majority of stay at home fathers expect to return to work full-time in the future" (Hallows, 2004, p. 159)

We can see in this extract how these instructional texts reproduce and shape normative expectations that primary caregiving fathers should expect a return to paid work. Specifically, fathers who have assumed the primary caregiving role, are constructed as though it is not a permanent role for them, and not viewed as a part of who fathers are. It is explicitly stated that fathers do not expect to stay in this role and will expect to return to work. This extract uses a consensus warrant—a discursive strategy that claims a consensus on a particular view (Potter, 1996)—to emphasise that this is not something only some fathers feel, but "the majority" feel that this role is only temporary.

Fathers engaged in paid work similarly articulated the weight of expectation that they maintain a full-time position. Below, Kieran describes the expectations of a new manager that his part-time work arrangement, which he had engaged to spend more time caring for his children, be a temporary arrangement:

K: our office had a restructure um and this is back in um end of last year right, and so basically [there were] probably four of us that came from one office to a new office so we all had a new vice president, and so I had a little interview and um she said to me this four day week thing, is this something that you plan on continuing forever?
I: So do you think that was her own personal view on that?
K: [Y]eah absolutely and her just her ignorance you know and never having um worked with anyone you know part-time and just and ju-not having you know j-(exhales), yeah just eh her expectations
    (Kieran, 39, Communication Specialist)

Here Kieran articulates his manager's expectation that he should be working full-time and be in the office to do his work. Previously Kieran had discussed how 'it's not uncommon for um women with young kids to work part-time', but that 'it's not something that is seen typically or especially in my workplace for men to work part-

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time'. Kieran's comments suggest that it is considered appropriate and 'normal' for female employees to be working something other than full-time, but not for men; also, that individual managerial expectations may present a barrier to men working something other than full-time. We can see a link between the influence of cultural and organisational expectations on fathers and how they perform the fathering role, from the broader expectations that are held for gendered behaviour—that working full-time and providing financially is important to fulfil their fathering role, and it is thus less acceptable for men to step away from financial provision (Shirani et al., 2012). Gendered expectations are normalised outside of and brought into workplaces through interactions with colleagues, supervisors, managers (as Kieran's extract demonstrates above), and the interpretation of organisational policy.

This cultural and workplace expectation is not solely imposed on fathers. Fathers themselves can be seen as complicit with this expectation, given the social value often afforded to paid work as opposed to care work:

"After all, if my girl is away at school for four hours a day, don't I owe it to my family to at least edge my way back into 'productive' (i.e., 'paid') work?" (Baylies & Toonkel, 2004, p. 160)

In this extract a father is trying to justify a return to work by outlining how fathers "owe" it to their family to return to work in some capacity once they are able to. Further, paid work is framed as productive which undermines the importance and significance of care work. This significantly emphasises the cultural expectation that fathers should engage in paid work, as well as the social value placed on paid work. Placing "productive" and "paid" in inverted commas and framing this statement as a hypothetical question, works to position this account not as a father's own desire or feeling, but rather as though there are external pressures or expectations to which he is

responding. This father, in a way, is trying to navigate these expectations and is negotiating whether he is supposed to return to what he thinks is viewed as "productive work".

These accounts indicate a sense of critical thinking from fathers, and despite the continual reproduction of gendered parenting expectations, there were accounts that were critical of these:

"The expectations for stay-at-home dads are different than they are for stay-at-home moms. If a stay-at-home mom continues to stay at home after the kids in school, our society says, "That's fine.' Stay-at-home dads, however, are *expected* to return to work. Why? Why aren't moms expected to go back to work? What does this mean for my three daughters?" (Schatz, 2009, p. 168)

Whilst such accounts appeared to be rare, that some fathers questioned normative expectations around the gendered division of parenting can be argued to evidence some shifts in practices and understandings of fatherhood. However, as this section has demonstrated, the cultural and workplace expectations reported by fathers continues to reinforce that they should be full-time financial providers.

Overall, these accounts demonstrate the social value and capital of paid work. Fathers not only feel a cultural and normative expectation that they should engage in full-time paid work, but they report frequently verbalised and explicit expectations placed on them. These findings highlight the continued social value placed on paid work, and even though some critical insight into this was identified, more often than not, this value afforded to paid work continues to influence fathers' decisions around paid work and care work.

7.5.2 Paid work and fathers' identity construction

Both datasets identified that fathering identity was constructed around paid work. Both primary caregiving fathers and fathers who engaged in paid work constructed financial providing as an inherent part of who they are, and something they cannot remove themselves from, irrespective of their role. Caregiving, however, is constructed as simply a role they take on (Hunter, Riggs, et al., 2017; Miller, 2010, 2011).

This idea of caregiving as a role, not an identity, was particularly evident in texts written by and addressing primary caregiving fathers. These fathers who have actively stepped away from paid work, were still constructed in relation to their role as providers. Specifically, it is detailed at length how the biggest difficulty for fathers transitioning into the primary caregiving role, is in giving up the provider role:

"Stay-at-home dads often experience conflict over relinquishing personal power, loss of control and identity related to not being the primary provider, and the challenges of redefining what is masculine and what is feminine" (Gill, 2001), p. 24)

"Numerous stay-at-home dads report that one of the hardest adjustments to becoming an at-home father is dealing with their own conflicted emotions about money. More specifically, the loss of power and sense of emasculation that may accompany the decision to hand over the financial reins to the wife" (Gill, 2001, p. 66-67)

The first extract makes clear that when fathers step away from the provider role, they simultaneously lose their identity. They are also described as losing the power and control that they are awarded through paid work and fathers are therefore described as struggling over this loss. This extract establishes how financial providing and paid work are bound up in how fathers understand who they are. Therefore, they are constructed

as needing to redefine or renegotiate what it means to be masculine in order to make sense of their loss of identity.

The second extract details more specifically why giving up the provider role results in a sense of loss and a disruption to their masculine identity. Hegemonic masculinity is tied to power and privilege for men, and paid work contributes to this (Connell, 2005a). One way this occurs is the way in which being the primary income earner allows men the opportunity to assert or demonstrate their dominance through control of money, financial decision making, and the notion of being in charge or the "head of the household" more generally. The first extract outlined that a sense of loss was experienced in giving up paid work, however, this second extract describes how fathers can experience concern from not only the loss of power in giving up paid work, but the loss of power and control that comes with their partner potentially gaining this power over them, displacing their position in the family.

Significantly, the language in this extract demonstrates how these fathers are still in a privileged position, whereby they are struggling to decide if they want to give up their control and power to their partners. They are not in a position where they are forced to give up their hegemonic privilege—they are described as making a 'decision'. What makes this decision potentially damaging for these fathers, is that, if they do choose to take on primary caregiving, they are choosing to give up their privileged position, thereby opening themselves up to a potentially threatened masculinity or emasculated position.

Fathers who attempt to combine both paid work and caregiving responsibilities, position themselves as striking a balance between traditional, provider fathers and new, involved fathers. However, despite how they construct their role it can be seen that the

provider role takes primacy. Below, Frank discusses a realisation he had after taking some time off from work when his son was born:

I thought I so don't wanna go back to work I really do not wanna go back to work . . . and then I stopped and thought a bit more and thought hang on this is really unrealistic you cannot live you know both of you um, your wife and you and your infant son someone has to support your family and someone has to show the um, and I reckon this is kind of a really important point too, someone has to demonstrate to your son that it's ok and good to be out you know doing your job that you enjoy and um earning a living and demonstrating a sort of work ethic, and I think that's really important (Frank, 42, Journalist)

I can't imagine her going back to work and letting me look after the children when they were very young…so I think there's a greater desire ah, desire's maybe not the right word, um instinct is probably a better word ah for the female partner to stay home whereas the male partner wants to be involved but there's also an instinct um or at least I've felt one to provide (Gary, 33, Acquisitions Manager)

In the first extract Frank describes the importance of supporting his family and of demonstrating a good work ethic. Here, his dual role as father and worker is acknowledged, but primacy is given to his role as worker. The importance of this role is further demonstrated by his positioning of paid work as having the potential to teach his son how to be a successful and accomplished person, and of financially providing for your family as the ultimate responsibility for men. Frank's wife also worked part-time, but from this extract it can be reasoned that Frank sees setting an example for his son as working full-time rather than part-time—reproducing the naturalness of the idea that fathers must financially provide, and demonstrating the importance of paid work to fathering identity.

Further, Frank's positioning of the importance of paid work to his fathering identity demonstrates that despite fathers understanding that they are combining fatherhood and work, they are in a position whereby the amount of caregiving they

engage in, outside of financial provision, remains discretionary (a position and choice that women traditionally have not been afforded) (Brandth & Kvande, 2016; Miller, 2011; Suwada, 2017b). Extract two demonstrates that some fathers do not recognise the availability of this choice to them, and draw upon essentialist discourses to justify them while at the same time presenting women's actions as not a choice.

Gary's use of the word instinct, for example, constructs behaviour in relation to parenting as biological and gendered. It simultaneously frames the provider role as one that is instinctual for fathers and provides an explanation for his continued engagement in full-time paid work. The interviewed fathers emphasised that although they did participate in care work, their partners and women in general were better at care than men, which further underpinned and legitimised their role within the family as provider. The legitimisation of the provider role also allows fathers to express a desire to be more involved in caregiving, while providing a socially accepted justification as to why they are not more involved. Further it can be seen that Gary positions mothers as having to provide permission, 'to let' fathers take on more caregiving responsibility (Allen & Hawkins, 1999; McBride et al., 2005; Miller, 2011). This acquiescing is similar to what has been found in other research whereby men continue to both position themselves and to be positioned as secondary parents (Borgkvist, Eliott, et al., 2018; Miller, 2010, 2011; Rose et al., 2015).

Overall, these accounts demonstrate that regardless of men's degree of involvement in paid work, the provider role continues to constitute dominant understandings of fatherhood. The significance of paid work to both masculine and fathering identity is evident. Fathers who were faced with giving up the provider role described a loss of identity, and working fathers continued to emphasise and privilege

their connection to paid work and the importance of their provider role. These findings highlight an important aspect of men's constructions of fathering identity, namely the influence that the provider role continues to have on this construction.

7.5.3 Renegotiating hegemonic masculinity

Given that involvement in paid work continues to inform the fathering identity, it can perhaps be expected that fathers who cannot demonstrate their provider role, either because they partially or fully step away from paid work, describe a sense of threat to their masculinity. In order to manage this threat, qualities of hegemonic masculinity can be drawn upon to show that they are still able to meet expectations of what is considered normative for contemporary fathers:

"These approaches – Mom's comforting style and Dad's do-it-yourself technique - are fairly typical of the way men and women parent." (Gill, 2001, p. 92)

"Plus, I have my manly jobs to perform: lawns to be mowed, edges to be whipper snipped, and gutters to be cleaned." (Robertson, 2012, p. 208)

The above extracts demonstrate how fathers utilise traits of hegemonic masculinity to show that they are able to meet expectations of what is considered normative for men and fathers (Edley & Wetherell, 1999). For primary caregiving fathers, the threat is significant because not only are they stepping away from full-time paid work but they are also engaging in care work which is traditionally viewed as feminine. Therefore, highlighting their masculine qualities discursively protects them from being positioned as feminine.

The first extract describes fathers as having a physical and hands on approach to parenting and is described as a technique, whereas mothers are described as having a comforting style. These descriptions clearly position mothering as feminine and

fathering as masculine. These descriptions are substantiated by a reliance on a gender essentialist argument. The extract draws on the notion that men and women have unique attributes due to their gender and therefore mothers and fathers have unique parenting styles.

The second extract outlines a variety of tasks this father engages in as part of his caregiving or "at-home" role. This father asserts his masculinity by outlining how he remains responsible for the "manly" and outdoor tasks. These particular chores are not related to the caregiving role or domestic sphere and works to establish that despite taking on caregiving, this father does not step away from his masculine role. Further, it could be argued that these parenting texts suggest that a man is especially masculine if he is able to take on this traditionally feminine role and retain their masculinity.

The renegotiation of masculinity was seen not only in fathers who were completely removed from paid work, it was also seen in those who were currently or had previously utilised flexible working arrangements to work part-time. These fathers emphasised accepted, revered masculine traits in order to construct an identity which remained within the accepted boundaries of masculinity, and fathering identity:

I didn't want to lose contact with work for obvious reasons, ah totally, so what I negotiated was that I will have like what was it two days or three days off work, and two days I will be at work so I extended that, so I didn't take [paternity leave] in one lot of 6 weeks but it was 12 weeks. . . I'm doing the whole finance for the organisation so if I took you know a break without being able to participate in things, ah, it would be much harder for the manager to deal with (Oscar, 41, Administration officer)

Every task that I get given should take me twenty percent longer to do you know um, so I think that is the factor in my lack of career progression in general, um, now many people would get completely frustrated by that . . . it doesn't bother me really at all any more, I'm very much at peace with where I am in my career and where I am with my family (Kieran, 39, Communication Specialist)

In this first extract, Oscar emphasises his connection to paid work, and the importance of his position within the organisation. Even though he is taking time off after the birth of his daughter, which demonstrates a departure from hegemonic masculinity and suggests the desire to be involved in caregiving in some capacity, the fact that he positions himself as invaluable within the organisation and emphasises the need to maintain his duties re-aligns him with hegemonic masculinity—protecting him from being positioned as potentially feminine.

The second extract from Kieran is another example of a re-negotiation of his masculinity and fathering identity through engagement with, and emphasis of, masculine traits. Kieran emphasises his superior ability and stoicism in dealing with difficult situations—for example when he says 'many people would get completely frustrated by that [but] it doesn't really bother me at all anymore'; he engages with traits associated with masculinity. That Kieran also articulates his working part-time (four days per week) as a factor in his lack of career progression evidences his recognition of his departure from organisational expectations. This gives further weight to the argument that emphasis of masculine traits is intended to serve as a redeeming feature for his masculinity (Wetherell & Edley, 2014). However, what must also be noted here is the willingness of both Oscar and Kieran to step away from full-time paid work and engage more in caregiving; this engagement is required to progress masculinity, as will be discussed later in this paper.

In the first extract above, Oscar emphasised his commitment and value to the organisation in order to negate the potentially feminising decision to work less than full-time to more fully engage in caregiving; while Kieran emphasised his ability to remain stoic in the face of his career being jeopardised through his part-time work. It is worth

noting that Kieran's assertion that his career had been affected by his decision to reduce his working time, bolsters Oscar's statement that he did not want to lose contact with work. It is evident that stepping away from full-time paid work, in any capacity, may threaten masculine and fathering identities, and fathers' value as workers within their organisations. They also appear to recognise the expectations around their involvement in full-time paid work.

Overall, these accounts show that fathers who were not engaged in paid work, as well as fathers who engaged in various combinations of paid work and care work, highlighted hegemonic traits of masculinity and renegotiated their masculinity in order to protect themselves from being positioned as feminine. This further suggests that engagement in limited or reduced forms of paid work on its own is not enough to insulate masculinity from destabilisation due to engaging in care work—no matter how limited the engagement in care work.

7.6 Discussion/Conclusion

The analysis provided in this paper demonstrates how hegemonic masculinity continues to shape men's accounts of being financial providers within the family, preferably through full-time employment. Our analysis shows that men are engaging with cultural and social expectations that they should be more involved in caregiving through taking up flexible working arrangements and in some cases taking on the primary caregiving role. However, we have also shown that they still too engage with hegemonic masculine norms.

We demonstrated that, despite there being increasing suggestion that fathers' roles are evolving, men who provide primary caregiving and men who remain in paid work understand and negotiate their roles in similar ways. We identified that fathers do

not take on flexible work arrangements due to hegemonic expectations, and that fathers do not feel legitimate or socially valued in their caregiving role due to expectations of hegemonic masculinity.

7.7 Implications

In this research we focused on interviews conducted with working fathers and analysis of books written for fathers who provide primary care. Many of these fathers had stepped away from paid work to some degree; it has been previously shown that in doing this some fathers are trying to move away from the distant and detached model of traditional fathering (Hunter, Riggs, et al., 2017; Miller, 2011; Wall, 2014). However, while it seems that constructions and expectations of fathering identity have shifted, broader constructions of masculinity, and of employees, have not. This leads to a tension, and thus it can be seen that traditional gender norms and expectations continue to limit options.

The existence of a literature addressing primary caregiving fathers, for example, might be taken as evidence of a new and involved model of fathering. However, this paper demonstrates that these texts reproduce similar norms and expectations to working fathers. Rather than behaving and parenting in unique and distinct ways, the texts are for the most part reproducing the same gendered norms and expectations (Shirani et al., 2012). Primary caregiving fathers' removal from the workplace is novel and important, but is limited evidence of broader social change in norms of father involvement in caregiving. That is, suggestions of a new, involved fathering which is rapidly moving away from traditional notions of what it means to be a father may be premature, and there remains complexity around which fathers have the cultural capital and resources

to rework norms of masculinity and fatherhood (Hunter, Augoustinos, et al., 2017; Hunter, Riggs, et al., 2017; Roy & Dyson, 2010).

Similarly, the fathers who had stepped away from paid work in some capacity and engaged in flexible working arrangements also reproduced gender norms and expectations in relation to fathering and masculine identity. This reproduction could be seen in the ways they spoke about paid work and their roles within their families. They also renegotiated masculinity when they perceived their identities were threatened by being in the potentially feminising position of not being in full-time paid work (see Eisen & Yamashita, 2017; Henson & Rogers, 2001; Hrženjak, 2013; Kaplan & Knoll, 2018). Again, similarly to primary caregiving fathers, while it is evident that more men are expressing a desire to utilise flexibility and to be more involved in caregiving, the ways in which these roles are negotiated suggest that we must be cautious about assigning them novel or progressive status.

Ideally, the existence of fathers engaging with caregiving roles could be used to create social change in relation to gendered parenting expectations; however, the complexity of identity negotiation men must undertake should be acknowledged. Even though it appears men want to move away from the rigid provider role and, in some respects, are already doing this, this paper demonstrates how paid work continues to be a socially valued vessel through which they are able to enact and validate their power and masculinity. It is important to recognise this and examine it further because, as has been shown in this paper, when the ability to approximate hegemonic masculinity through paid work is no longer possible, fathers may respond by displaying and emphasising other masculine qualities available to them (Borgkvist, Moore, et al., 2018; Hrženjak, 2013; Kaplan & Knoll, 2018; Wetherell & Edley, 2014). If men continue to

respond by (re)producing and holding on to positions of privilege, social change may be difficult.

Therefore, it is suggested that a focus on structural and policy changes in relation to paid work (i.e. where men are strongly encouraged and supported to take paternity leave, such as in Sweden) may be beneficial in encouraging and normalising men's use of alternative ways of working (which are more frequently used by women) for the purposes of caregiving. This would require men to step away from paid work to engage in caregiving and incorporate those nurturing qualities as a norm. The continual and visible enaction of men engaging in this behaviour has been shown to contribute to a destabilisation of masculinity and what it means to be a father—as it will no longer be seen as an individual choice to take on this role, but rather, would entail a societal shift where fathers are not only encouraged but also supported and expected to engage in caregiving (Almqvist, 2008; Brandth & Kvande, 2016, 2018c; Bünning, 2015; Miller, 2011; Miller & Nash, 2016).

Accordingly, although social changes seem unlikely to progress quickly, or as quickly as has been suggested (Elliott, 2016), care work and men's involvement in care work has the potential to destabilise masculinity and to encourage a broadening of men's identities in relation to caregiving. The existence of men who assume the primary caregiving role and utilise flexible work arrangements, like in this study, are evidence of shifting (albeit restricted) understandings of fathering. Therefore, men's further and supported engagement with caregiving will be required in order to disrupt and further progress notions of masculinity and what fathering is and means. What are considered acceptable roles for men to assume, and what is given broad social and cultural value, will not evolve without disruption; this disruption will require men engaging with work

that is currently socially undervalued—care work. As more men engage with and choose to assume caregiving roles, it is suggested that this will lead to paid work and care work being increasingly culturally, equally valued. Further, this disruption is necessary in order to work towards the development of a masculinity which does not (re)produce and maintain men's privilege and power—particularly the power to choose how much caregiving to incorporate into their identities.

It is acknowledged that this analysis is based upon two discrete sources of data, collected with different aims and populations, and findings could have been more detailed or specific if the original intent had been to compare across the datasets. Similarly, we acknowledge our focus on men who can be categorised as white, heteronormative, and middle-to-upper class, with little cultural variation. Whilst the datasets did not seek or recruit these men specifically, they did present as the majority. Even so, it is likely that stepping away from paid work is a privilege that is not afforded to all men (and women) equally. The men focused on in this paper are in a position to take risks financially and also with their masculinity, due to the power they are often afforded in their social position (Hunter, Riggs, et al., 2017). Future research should consider fathers who occupy different variations of paid work and care work, different ethnicity and class, and are same-sex parents.

Nonetheless, this paper has demonstrated the continuing significance and power of paid work and hegemonic masculinity in the lives of contemporary fathers. However, this paper has also identified the power that care work has to potentially destabilise contemporary forms of masculinity that continue to be influenced by hegemonic masculinity. The discursive work identified in this paper demonstrates how significantly care work destabilises men's sense of identity and masculinity. Given the effort taken to

renegotiate their masculine identity when stepping away from paid work, it is here that the potential for further destabilisation of hegemonic masculinity lies.

Chapter 8: 'I've got flexibility around my flexibility too':

Critical considerations of workplace flexibility

8.1 Preamble

The previous chapters have highlighted the various factors which may present as barriers or facilitators to men's use of flexible working arrangements. One prominent factor is gendered expectations about what roles men should inhabit within organisations and within families. For example, Chapter 5 showed that the ideal worker norm remains a strong influence regarding men's connection to paid work, and Chapters 6 and 7 showed the strong influence of the male breadwinner role both in men stepping away from full-time paid work and in men's constructions of masculine and fathering identities. It was considered a logical next step to investigate how flexibility is discussed and implemented within organisations, whether there is a gendered component to these discussions and implementations, and to highlight how this might present as a further barrier to men's use of flexibility. This chapter presents my analysis of interviews with workplace managers, in manuscript form in preparation for submission for publication.

Statement of Authorship

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Contribution to the Paper	Designed the study, drafted ethics application, was responsible for recruitment of participants, conducted interviews, analysed results, drafted manuscript.
Overall percentage (%)	70%
Certification:	This paper reports on original research I conducted during the period of my Higher Degree by Research candidature and is not subject to any obligations or contractual agreements with a third party that would constrain its inclusion in this thesis. I am the primary author of this paper.
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By signing the Statement of Authorship, each author certifies that:

i. the candidate's stated contribution to the publication is accurate (as detailed above);

ii. permission is granted for the candidate in include the publication in the thesis; and

iii. the sum of all co-author contributions is equal to 100% less the candidate's stated contribution.

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8.2 Abstract

Little research has looked at how flexibility is talked about and framed within organisations, or considered the impact this may have on men's use of flexible working arrangements. How men navigate these tensions is known to be influenced by factors such as unsupportive work environments, concerns regarding career progression, and the 'ideal worker norm'. Nonetheless, men's use of workplace flexibility is becoming more common, often to enable better work-life integration. To investigate how flexibility was discussed and negotiated within organisations, we interviewed 12 senior managers within four large Australian organisations about flexible work arrangements, both in relation to themselves and their employees. The interviews were then qualitatively analysed with a critical lens. Analysis of the managers' responses suggested that flexibility was viewed as for women; flexibility was associated with lower level, routinised roles; and flexibility (and the consequences of flexibility use) was said to be what women wanted. Generally, men privileged a strong connection to paid work by using informal forms of flexible working arrangements. In contrast, women typically had formal arrangements that were fixed in order for them to meet caring commitments. This framing of flexibility has implications for men and women; men's flexibility around flexible working enables them to maintain their standing as career-oriented ideal workers.

8.3 Introduction

Flexible work arrangements provide an important avenue for employees to manage work and home responsibilities. These arrangements may include working part-time, working from home, compressed work weeks, and working shorter hours. It is generally recognised that working part-time has enabled women to return to work after having children, and more variety in flexible working arrangements has been seen as

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positive for women's participation in the workforce (Baird, 2011; Cooke & Baxter, 2010; Hegewisch & Gornick, 2011; Huerta et al., 2013; Williams, 2010). Men's use of flexibility has the potential to facilitate gender equality both at work and at home, to enable more involved and engaged fathering, and to provide opportunities for men to have a greater focus on their own health and well-being (Williams, 2010), but has not been promoted until relatively recently (see Haas & Hwang, 2016).

Flexible working arrangements potentially have many benefits for organisations as well. For example, flexibility is argued to influence attraction and retention of skilled staff, to enable employees to better balance work and life which improves work performance, and may increase workforce diversity (Huerta et al., 2013; Joyce et al., 2010; Sanders et al., 2016). Accordingly, many organisations are beginning to recognise the potential benefits in promoting flexibility for all employees, from their CEOs down (Ely & Meyerson, 2006; Haas & Hwang, 2009; Sanders et al., 2016; Williamson, Colley, Foley, & Cooper, 2018).

The workplace is an inherently masculine space that promotes the 'ideal worker' norm, according to many researchers (Acker, 1990; Atkinson & Hall, 2009; Atkinson, 2011; Berdahl et al., 2018; Collinson & Hearn, 2005; Durbin, 2010; Ely & Kimmel, 2018; Kerfoot & Knights, 1993; Kerfoot, Knights, Sabelis, Pullen, & Rhodes, 2015; Sallee, 2013). Acker (1990) described the ideal worker as an employee who is able to dedicate themselves to work with no outside distractions. Historically, the ideal worker has been a male employee because men have had female partners to manage home and caretaking responsibilities. Acker (1990) further explained that while the concepts of 'job' and 'employee' are presented as gender neutral, they become gendered through relational interactions within the workplace, including through speech, and have gender

expectations attached to them. Others have highlighted that value in most organisations is given to the display or possession of masculine attributes (see Blair-Loy & Cech, 2017; Brescoll, 2016; Connell, 2006b; Ely & Meyerson, 2000b; Lee, 2018; Moss-Racusin et al., 2010; Vandello, Hettinger, Bosson, & Siddiqi, 2013).

This paper works from the premise that, although flexibility can (in theory) allow men greater work-life integration and involvement with families, the descriptions of ways in which flexibility is implemented and used in practice requires further exploration. Specifically, the aim is to explore the extent to which accounts of men's use of flexible working arrangements maintain or disrupt the traditional gender divide around work and associated ideologies.

Elsewhere we have presented the accounts of men in relation to these topics (Borgkvist, Eliott, et al., 2018; Borgkvist, Moore, et al., 2018). Here, we were particularly interested in the perspectives of managers on these issues because they are often responsible for approving and managing employee requests for flexible working arrangements (Cooper & Baird, 2015; Michielsens et al., 2013). With the recent move towards promotion of flexibility for all staff (see, for example, Sanders et al., 2016), managers may also confront this tension in their own lives. Thus, at a number of levels, representations by managers seem worthy of attention. Managers', and particularly senior and upper managers', support or non-support of flexible working arrangements can be seen as an embodiment of the organisations' position in regard to the offer and use of flexibility (Neves, 2011). This may put managers in a difficult position whereby they are expected to both uphold the organisational values which privilege business requirements and to consider the needs of their employees, by attempting to facilitate

their knowledge and use of flexibility and work-life balance initiatives (Bradley et al., 2009; Hay, 2014).

8.4 Method

Following relevant ethics committee approval, data were collected from 12 semi-structured interviews with three female and nine male senior managers, across a number of different organisations and industries, including insurance, engineering, banking, and production. Organisations were chosen for inclusion based upon their size and a positive response from the Human Resources manager. Most of the participating organisations had publicly supported flexible working arrangements in the previous year, in line with widespread national efforts endorsed by the Equal Opportunity Commissioner of the state in which this research was conducted (South Australia).

Of the eight organisations sent our unsolicited email (from a university email account, with official insignia and web links to our research profiles), outlining the project and requesting participation, four eventually provided access to relevant managers they employed. Managers were required to be responsible for the supervision of four or more employees, and to be responsible for the approval and management of any flexible working arrangements. It is unknown how many managers declined an internal approach by Human Resources (HR).

Initial liaison with managers was by email. Managers were asked to contact the first author by email to express interest in participation, and were then sent a participant information sheet. After being informed about the study, agreement to participate was notified by email, and a reply to organise the interview was taken as consent. A mutually agreed upon interview time and location was then negotiated.

Interviews were conducted in participants' offices or another workspace they nominated. The first author conducted the interviews with either the second or third author also present. Detailed notes were taken by both present, and verbatim quotes were recorded where possible. The two written records were subsequently compared and collated to ensure the maximum accuracy and level of details was recorded from each interview. Where quotes are given in this paper as verbatim, curly brackets are used to indicate words that were illegible or not captured.

Being semi-structured, the interviews started with general questions around the topics of interest, to enable participants to direct the conversation. More specific questions were asked as the interviews proceeded, in response to the information provided by participants. In reporting the analysis, the names (and any other identifying details) of participants have been changed and the names of workplaces omitted to protect privacy and confidentiality.

Thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) was used to analyse the collated written notes from each interview. These textual data were read and re-read, and coded by searching for patterns that recurred across and within interviews. Analysis was guided by critical theoretical perspectives such as those of Joan Acker (1990), Carol Bacchi (2009), and Sara Ahmed (2007b, 2015); central to these critical perspectives, and to the present analysis, are theoretical concepts of gender, 'othering', and gendered organisational culture. During the data collection and analysis process, the data, codes, and themes were discussed amongst the authors to consolidate ideas and analysis.

8.5 Analysis

In this research we explored and critically reflected on how managers talked about workplace flexibility, in relation to themselves and their employees, closely

attending to gendered dimensions of this talk. Two themes are presented and discussed below. First, flexibility was often framed as primarily for use by female employees; second, employees using flexibility within organisations were often represented as unable to be dedicated to paid work. We argue that these constructions encourage flexibility to be used in ways which reinforce gendered expectations in the workplace, and we show how men eluded the stigma associated with flexible working arrangements.

8.5.1 Flexibility is still seen as 'a female thing'

Flexibility is still predominantly framed as a 'woman's issue'. This was reflected in the speech of many of the managers who participated in this study.

Managers were initially asked about flexibility generally within their organisations, how it operated, and how well they thought it worked. Gender was not mentioned in these opening questions, and yet the norm of women's use of flexibility was typically (re)produced in managers' responses, with flexibility always discussed first in relation to women. All managers typically responded with accounts of women using flexibility in working part-time, going on maternity leave, or working compressed hours to drop off and pick up children from school. Marcus, for example, a manager at a production company, stated 'there's still no doubt that females still take on the burden of parenting so they still need flexibility around that'. This statement exemplifies how taken-for-granted it is that women will hold parenting responsibilities, without challenging or questioning why this still occurs, or why men do not take these responsibilities on to the same extent.

Most other managers similarly talked about flexibility as being primarily required for women with, or wanting to have, children. One manager, Raymond, from

an insurance company, stated that the policies within his organisation overall had helped to facilitate women taking time off to have children and then return to work part-time. He further stated, however, that 'it's the *accepted norm still that you work five days a week* and you're in the office' (italics added). Here we see full-time work explicitly named the norm and alternatives to full-time work 'othered'—in the sense that employees can become marked as different when they are seen to be unable to meet organisational expectations and demands (Ahmed, 2007b, 2015; Blair-Loy & Cech, 2017).

Managers also talked about men's use of flexibility, although often this did not occur spontaneously, and a prompt was required. Jake, a manager at a banking organisation, stated that 'occasionally they [men] want to work from home but it's not a permanent change. For example, they have a child unwell'. Marcus talked about men within his organisation leaving early to pick their children up and arriving later after dropping them off at school. He specified that this was primarily because these men were divorced or separated and, lacking a female partner to undertake these duties, found themselves now responsible for them—thereby painting these men as the exceptions to other men within his organisation. Similarly, Kevin, a manager at an insurance company, explained that of his 104 male staff, one was using flexibility for childcare purposes because he was separated from his wife.

In these accounts, men's use of flexibility appeared to be linked to an inability to rely on a female partner to perform childcare duties, while women's use of flexibility was not framed in this way. These kinds of accounts work to construct and normalise women's care of children, and makes men doing this care-work the exception. These differences in framing fail to challenge, and in fact maintain and reinforce, the unspoken

norm of women's responsibility for children and care—and thus their, rather than men's, need to have access to and use flexible working arrangements to enable them to meet this responsibility.

8.5.2 Use of flexibility affects perceived dedication to work

In the interviews we conducted, there was an apparent view of flexibility as related to an employee's level of dedication to work, whereby flexibility was associated with reduced commitment. This representation was framed as almost inevitable for women and offered as an impediment to men taking up flexible working arrangements. This was something that women needed to overcome if they were to be seen as serious about their careers, but was generally framed as something that women readily and unquestionably accepted.

Two male senior managers within an insurance company, articulated the main elements of this theme:

I think in some ways it's harder for men, they see themselves as the breadwinner . . . guys tend to be much more concerned about their managers seeing them performing. [In one section of the organisation this] manager is quite traditional and men are concerned that if they work from home they'll be seen to be slacking off and it will reflect in their performance reviews (Raymond)

I think it's perceived as being a thing for women . . . men would feel there's a stigma in using flexibility . . . I think it's a long-ingrained thing that probably arcs [harks] back to the traditional way of working (Charles)

Charles' use of the word stigma is noteworthy. Stone and Hernandez (2013) describe women as subject to the 'flexibility stigma', which Wayne and Cordeiro (2003) explain as meaning an employee is a 'poor organisational citizen'—and Charles' account illustrates men's awareness of organisational stigma and desire not to be tainted (see also Austen & Mavisakalyan, 2018; Heilman, 2012; Lyness & Heilman, 2006; Lyness & Schrader, 2007). His account here implies that, to the extent that women also experience this stigma and related career consequences, they (are expected to) accept it.

Amy, a female senior manager at the same insurance company, explained her attempts to overcome this form of gender stereotyping: 'I pay someone to pick my kids up because I don't want to be seen to be needing flexibility'. Amy explained that 'women have a perception that they've got to be there, that they've got to be productive' and may often feel that they need to work especially hard to prove that they are dedicated to their jobs. It is unclear whether Amy is referring to all women but in light of her colleagues' comments, above, it would seem to refer to women like her who aspire to management positions.

Within the same organisation, there were some men who were presented as having priorities outside of work, and as not being career oriented. For example, Doug described these employees, who worked in a call centre:

call centre work doesn't attract the cream of the crop, although there are some people with degrees working in there . . . because it's the type of work you can come and do and then go home. So it's that work-life balance, maybe it's the structure that provides the work-life balance. We have a lot of blokey blokes working in the call centre as well. They want to be able to go fishing or go to the footy, they want a job that's structured in

its hours but then gives them the weekend, or after hours to have their own time to do what they want.

For these men, the 'blokey' nature of these priorities arguably offsets the stigma associated with not being concerned with career progression.

In contrast, in a banking company, Teddy made a distinction between analytical roles that were represented as suited to men and unable to be undertaken part-time, and customer-facing roles, which were represented as most appropriate for women and able to be undertaken part-time. This depiction constructed women as better suited to caring roles both within and outside of the organisation, with these roles not oriented to career progression. Teddy described recently giving consideration to accepting a woman who had returned from maternity leave into a team with high-worth customers and analytical responsibilities. He claimed he was willing to consider whether she could work four days per week, but she requested three. He declined because he did not believe the work could be done in three days per week. Below he suggested the responsibilities of this team were not bounded:

[I]t's not a role you can walk into and think you can just turn it on and turn it off Monday to Friday . . . if you can do this job in 30 hours a week, good luck to ya, sell the story and retire.

Teddy's incredulity that such a role could be performed part-time was expressed in how newsworthy such an achievement would be if it were possible.

An exception to the expectation that men be dedicated to paid work seemed to be made when men took paternity leave: this did not appear to raise questions about their

dedication to work. The distinction appeared to be the difference between a block of leave for a defined period and ongoing partial availability for work.

One of a number of examples was provided by Rosa, a manager within a consulting company, who spoke about the growing numbers of men taking paternity leave within her organisation and the widespread respect for this. She reported that a man had said to her 'my wife has put in just as many years to her career as I have so why should she have to have this interruption alone . . . [and] why should I miss out on that time with my child'. However, Rosa went on to say that men took shorter periods of leave than women following the birth of a child and almost always returned to work full-time. In contrast, women typically returned to work part-time.

Furthermore, Rosa drew attention to the difference between informal and formal flexible working arrangements. Informal refers to loose agreements between employees and their managers, whereas formal agreements are part of employment conditions or contracts. Both men and women were reported by Rosa to use informal agreements, but formal agreements were almost solely the purview of women, in order to meet caring obligations. Many other managers reiterated this. The significance of informal agreements and the gender specificity of formal agreements will be taken up in the next section.

8.5.3 Reinforcement of the Gendered Use of Flexibility

In considering the interviews we conducted, it became apparent that rather than challenging gender stereotypes, flexibility could function as a way of reproducing these. As Doug explained:

In general, flexible work historically applied more to a working mother than a working father. At [organisation] I think that my impression is that it is quite equal. For example, I'm fortunate, I can [pretty much] rock up when I like, leave when I like. I have formally written into my [contract] that I can leave at 2:30 on a Monday . . . I don't feel as though because I'm a Dad that there's any shame in taking a few hours off on a Monday.

Based on the above excerpts, so far the impression is of a more gender equitable situation than in the past. However, as we further explore Doug's descriptions of his use of flexibility, a number of the expressions used flag that he was referring to informal and formal flexible arrangements and for him these could vary from week to week. The significance of this type of arrangement lay in his ability to suspend his external commitments (usually parenting) when work presented a more compelling use of his time. For example, Doug mentioned accommodating work meetings on Monday afternoons, despite his arrangement to leave early:

I'd feel reasonably comfortable being able to [dial in] . . . [but] if it's a meeting that I really want to be there and it's important then I'd prefer to be there rather than dial in . . . I'm [entitled to] leave at 2.30 on Mondays. But next Monday I won't as a meeting has been called. [It's] important to be there, so I will. How important is it? I make that determination.

As Doug summarised, 'I've got flexibility around my flexibility too'.

This elastic approach to flexibility functions to uphold men's status as ideal workers and protects them from stigma when they do work flexibly; they can and do still prioritise work, despite using some flexibility. A number of other accounts from men were similar to this one from Doug, although less explicit. Common were descriptions of ensuring

men were available for work when required and using flexible arrangements in a way that would not compromise work commitments. In contrast, descriptions of women often emphasised how efficient they were at work in order to take up FWA, and the rigidity of their schedules and obligations. Adrian for example, a banking manager, described two female staff members who 'both achieve in four days what others do in five. They're disciplined. Maybe it is because time is precious. Instead of small talk they use their time productively'.

The wider literature characterises women's use of workplace flexibility as enmeshed in external obligations, as an inflexible flexibility, where caregiving responsibilities cannot be sidelined to prioritise work when required (see, for example, Baxter & Hewitt, 2013; Baxter, 2013a; Stone, 2008; Williams, 2010). What is novel in the current analysis is the insight gained into how some men are able to sidestep the apparent tension between being an ideal worker and using flexibility, in order to maintain their privileged position in the workplace.

The ability of organisational processes around flexibility to reproduce gendered meaning and norms is noteworthy. Within most of the organisations involved in this research, senior managers indicated that there was a strongly gendered pattern for many roles, often said to be what employees wanted. Roles which were described as suitable to be undertaken on a part-time basis, in which women predominated, often required lower levels of skill or training, and 'softer skills'. An example can be seen in the below quote from Jake, where he talked about banking tellers and how they did not have many male employees who work part-time:

We don't have many guy tellers. Guys go straight into personal banking. It's not imbalanced, it's probably what people want.

A quote from Adrian provides a further example:

Banks want the efficiency and productivity. There is an increasing proportion of part-time roles. Young males don't see it as a career . . . It's really strange. We don't get a lot of males applying [to be] tellers. Lending, commercial banking—a much higher percentage are male . . . because they see that as value adding or sexy.

Teller positions are relatively low level within banking organisations (and many have been replaced by automated teller machines). Scholarios and Taylor (2011) have suggested that more routinised roles are almost exclusively occupied by women; they are seen to have lower capital value, they lend themselves to substitution of individuals, and are associated with part-time work and caregiving (Durbin, 2010; Holtgrewe, 2007; Howcroft & Richardson, 2010; Lyness & Heilman, 2006; Ridgeway, 2014; Ridgeway & Nakagawa, 2017; Rudman, Moss-Racusin, Phelan, & Nauts, 2011; Rudman & Phelan, 2008; Walby, 2011; Warren & Lyonette, 2018). This fitted-ness is taken-for-granted in the managers' accounts. Managers rarely considered that women might want more demanding or creative roles, and the possibility that these roles might be undertaken flexibly.

This reproduction of assumptions by managers is concerning because it has implications for women wanting to progress and excel within organisations. With the power to make decisions regarding employees, managers are able to facilitate differential opportunities for men and women commensurate with these assumptions— assumptions which work to frame flexibility as for women. A lack of acknowledgement of these gendered practices and processes means men are implicitly encouraged to covet and apply for positions where their contributions and workplace commitment are not in

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doubt, and where their masculinity can be performed in an inherently more valued organisational position.

Among the very few exceptions to this framing of flexibility use was an example provided by Marcus, in which he described, in his workplace, how all three daughters of the company owner worked within the organisation in some capacity. He said that 'the family have really helped to set the culture around flexibility in the organisation'. This organisation possibly had a less pronounced gendered hierarchy in roles compared with others, but as traced in other aspects of Marcus' narrative above, flexibility was still largely presented as for women.

8.6 Discussion

Existing literature demonstrates that how workplace flexibility is discussed and implemented can have a real impact upon how employees interpret their entitlement to flexible working arrangements (Borgkvist, Moore, et al., 2018; Coltrane et al., 2013; Cooper & Baird, 2015; Gatrell et al., 2014b; Lewis, 1997; Smithson & Stokoe, 2005). Interviews with managers in this study affirm that flexibility continues to be portrayed in certain ways and is most readily spoken of in relation to women. In contrast, men were reported to use flexibility in ways which allowed them to be 'flexible about their flexibility'. This provisional uptake meant that men remained able to suspend other commitments (such as caregiving) and perform paid work when judged necessary, which maintained their status as ideal workers. All of this suggests that there is an immense and influential systemic issue that is not being addressed: organisations still want ideal workers—and men recognise this; women do too but many cannot comply, in large part due to the gendered differential in caregiving.

In this context, it was significant that managers spoke about women's, but not men's, responsibilities outside of work when they were asked about flexibility. At first we thought this may have been because the majority of those using flexibility within the organisations were women. However, a number of representatives of these organizations appeared to take pride in recent endeavours to promote flexibility for men, and managers provided considerable examples. Later, we determined that what made women continue to be visible and notable was their *commitment* to flexibility, reinforcing their deviation from the expected and accepted norm of working full-time (Gatrell, 2007b; Hochschild, 2012b; Lee, 2018). Thus, the organizational perspective on women and flexible work, as articulated by senior managers, had not shifted. This has a number of important implications which will now be discussed.

Women often work part-time, and this study demonstrates that this working arrangement is still used to reproduce ideas that women are not dedicated to work and do not want to progress into positions of greater responsibility. Women continue to be relied upon for lower level jobs with little opportunity for progression, particularly evident within the banking organisation in this study (see Blau, Ferber, & Winkler, 2014; Durbin, 2010; Gorman & Mosseri, 2019; Holtgrewe, 2007; Lyonette, 2015; Ridgeway, 2014). This link was reinforced by assumptions articulated by many managers, and the stated belief that this was what people wanted. Framing women's positions within organisations in this way renders invisible the role of workplace policies, practices and culture in shaping men and women's careers, and the lack of opportunities for women to take up roles at more senior levels, with recourse to regular and reliable initiatives for work-life integration.

In our study, men reported prioritising work over flexibility when it appeared that this was called for or in their interests. In this way men demonstrated that they were ideal workers, avoided the flexibility stigma and, at the same time, retained their ability to opt out of parenting responsibilities. This lack of commitment to parenting obligations in turn impacts upon women's ability to be ideal workers, probably even in small ways such as allowing women the possibility of 'being flexible about their flexibility'. This resonates with Suwada's (2017b) argument that men typically have the power to choose how engaged they are as fathers and workers, and that their choice, and how they enact that choice, usually restricts the choice of the mother. Arguably, the ability of men to choose how engaged they are in work and home life maintains the power relations in these domains, and acts as a restriction for women not only at home but also in the workplace (see also Bach, 2019; Blau et al., 2014; Gatrell, 2007a). Furthermore, when men sidestep the tension between the ideal worker and flexible work arrangements, attention continues to be drawn to women's perceived deficiencies in the workplace (Ahmed, 2015; Kugelberg, 2006; Lee, 2018; Minow, 1990).

Many managers spoke in ways that reproduced gendered constructions of women, men, and work. Consistent framing by senior managers suggests that these ideas permeate the workplace, are part of workplace culture and the taken-for-granted (Ahmed, 2015), and, consequently, are difficult to challenge. In failing to recognise or address these taken-for-granted notions, managers and organisations are tacitly condoning the status quo. Indeed, often men who were senior managers were themselves using flexibility in a provisional manner, thereby upholding this as the ideal approach. For women (particularly women in Australia who are much more likely to return to work part-time than women in other countries Baxter, 2013a; OECD, 2019), the inability to

present as an ideal worker (re)produces and further cements their positions within workplaces as 'other' (Ahmed, 2007b; Bacchi & Eveline, 2009; Lee, 2018).

Many organisations are now promoting flexibility as gender neutral, but we provide evidence that, often, it is not. This finding resonates with Wahl's (2014) argument that many gender equality initiatives do not specifically challenge the masculine norm in management, and do not have the effect of encouraging male managers to question gender differences in the workplace; they may only provide new ways and spaces within which managers can enact masculinity. Tracy and Rivera (2010) similarly found that although policies are designed to be (and touted by organisations as) gender neutral, often those within senior management positions retain gendered assumptions about who such policies relate to, and who is responsible for domestic and care responsibilities. Our study provides a powerful example of this and our analysis illustrates how this is possible.

Further, Bacchi (2009) argued that policies carry with them the notion that they fix things that need fixing. If managers see policy in this way, as resolving any gendered workplace issues, there is no impetus for a manager to further consider the gendered nature of workplaces, and to speak, act and interact in ways that challenge the (re)production of gendered behaviours and processes in workplaces. As Ahmed (2007a) has noted, not only are individuals relieved of this burden of proactivity through the existence of a policy, so is the organisation—because through the policy the organisation is demonstrating commitment to act. So responsibility for working towards gender equality is effectively diffused. Optimistic sentiments that flexible working arrangements had fixed or solved work-life balance issues were reflected in some of the managers' comments, and used to explain and individualise remaining gender

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imbalances as thus being 'what people wanted'. This discrepancy between policy and implementation has recently been found to present as a further barrier to men's use of flexibility (see Bosch, Heras, Russo, Rofcanin, & Grau-Grau, 2018; Bosoni & Mazzucchelli, 2018; Gatrell, Burnett, Cooper, & Sparrow, 2014a). Bosoni and Mazzuchelli (2018), for example, found in their study of Italian male employees, that they were much less likely to apply for and use a flexible arrangement if they were aware of a policy implementation gap.

There are some limitations with this study. Though a range of perspectives across a number of industries were included here, analysis was exploratory and any generalisations should be made cautiously. Managers in other industries or sectors may have offered different narratives. Further research may benefit from audio recording discussions allowing for a fine-grained analysis of discourse and speech used by managers to more deeply explore the gendered aspects of managers' talk (following the work of Edley, 2001; Wetherell et al., 1987). A more even distribution of male and female managers may also have provided the opportunity to further explore gender differences in managers' talk in relation to flexibility, and whether there was a difference in recognition of the potential implications of how flexibility is discussed within organisations.

8.7 Conclusion

The offer and promotion of flexibility for all employees, ostensibly attempting to present flexible working arrangements as gender neutral, appears to highlight a systemic issue— that organisations continue to covet ideal workers. Further, the processes and practices by which flexibility is discussed and implemented within organisations can have the effect of maintaining women's positions as 'other'—while at the same time allowing

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men to maintain their presentation as ideal workers. Currently, it seems men have the ability (and are encouraged) to be flexible about their flexibility. For flexibility to be framed differently in discussion and implemented differently in practice, men, managers, and institutions more broadly, need to embrace the use of flexible working arrangements to attend to responsibilities outside of work; the framing of flexibility in gendered ways needs to be challenged at the institutional level; and men themselves need to be willing to challenge the ideal worker norm.

Chapter 9: Discussion and Conclusion

Building upon previous literature, this research aimed to investigate barriers and facilitators to men's use of flexible working arrangements both at the individual and organisational level, as well as the role that masculine and fathering identities play in men's accounting for their use of workplace flexibility. Further, this research examined how men experience the use of flexible working arrangements, how managers talk about flexibility, and whether there is a gendered component in accounts of the flexibility in workplaces. As was also demonstrated throughout the thesis, there are many different forms and kinds of flexible working arrangements where the individual may have some influence over where, when, and how work is conducted. These forms may include working from home, reduced working hours, working part-time, telecommuting, flexi-time, and taking parental leave among other things. Some of these arrangements, such as working part-time or taking parental leave, are formal forms of flexible working, while others such as flexi-time and working from home are likely to be informal (depending on the organisation). Fathers' use of informal policies differs from their uptake of formal policies, whereby they are more likely to informally use flexibility than engage in formal changes to their contracts.

Chapter 1 gave a brief introduction to flexible working arrangements and the questions that guided this thesis. Chapter 2 provided a foundation for these questions, by outlining previous research pointing to the gendered nature of flexibility at work, as well as organisational reasons for men's low uptake. Chapters 3 and 4 described the theoretical and methodological orientation of this thesis, and how data were collected and analysed. The analytic chapters (Chapter 5-8) presented findings from this research as papers for publication. In the present chapter, I will summarise what these findings

tell us about how men approach the use of flexible working arrangements for family reasons, and discuss the findings and their implications for policy, practice, and future research. I will also contextualise and provide some discussion around what these findings might mean for masculinity and the progression of gender expectations (and gender equality) specifically.

9.1 Summary of Findings

The information collected throughout this research provides a resource for answering the questions posed in Chapter 1:

1.   What are the barriers and facilitators, at the individual and organisational level, to men's use of flexible work arrangements?

2.   What role does the construction of masculine and fathering identities have in men's decisions to use or not use flexible working arrangements?

3.   How do men experience the use of flexible working arrangements?

4.   How do managers talk about workplace flexibility and is there a gendered component to these discussions?

Specifically, the results provide valuable insight about how Australian men and their workplace managers currently talk about decisions relating to the use of flexible working arrangements, paid work, and parenting.

First, the results from this research suggest that gender expectations and norms (around work and family) have both evolved and remained the same. For example, the recognition by fathers that they should be more involved in fathering and associated care activities is evidence that gender expectations have evolved. That fathers generally reported not being as involved in parenting as their female partners is evidence that more

traditional gender expectations and norms have also remained the same. This is perhaps the most significant finding of this research—gender norms and expectations in relation to work and parenting are tenacious. One reason for this appears to be that the provider role continues to be legitimised as the most valuable role for fathers to take on. Concomitantly, Australian men do not have the cultural and structural support to step away from full-time paid work, and most men remain guided by dominant cultural constructions of masculinity, thereby entrenching traditional enactments of masculinity and fathering. Gender equity in the workplace and home, and all the benefits that result, will remain elusive while these dominant constructions and structures remain.

In Chapter 5, through analysis of interviews with working fathers of young children, I investigated the relationship between masculine identity and paid work, and the influence that this association might have on men's decisions to use or not use flexible working arrangements. I demonstrated that the ideal worker norm remains highly influential in men's decision making in relation to adhering to organisational norms and expectations, which see men maintaining a strong connection to full-time paid work. The working fathers interviewed for this study discussed a need to be at work, to be seen to be working, and expressed concerns about perceptions of managers and colleagues regarding their working status. Further, the need to maintain a strong connection to paid work was linked to the expression of masculinity and masculine identity, particularly being a breadwinner. Fathers commonly spoke of the need to provide for their families, but their responses also suggested their behaviour was influenced by a need to perform their masculinity through work achievement.

Finally, the working fathers I interviewed discussed entitlement to use flexible working arrangements, particularly for family reasons. There was a distinct lack of

'sense of entitlement' (Lewis, 1997) among my participants in relation to workplace flexibility; these fathers saw flexibility as an entitlement for mothers and for women but not for themselves. Collectively, these findings provide a picture of the ways in which working fathers are restricted within the organisational environment, as well as the ways they consider acceptable to express their masculine and fathering identities. The seemingly inextricable links between masculinity, paid work, and fathering identity, and the ways in which these appear to both shore up and perpetuate one another provides a concerning outlook for the tasks ahead in dismantling these associations.

Chapter 6 presented further analysis of the interviews conducted with working fathers and focussed on: the ways in which fathers constructed parenting; whether they constructed alternative masculinities in relation to parenting; and if and how institutional constraints contributed to men's performances of masculinity and fathering. This chapter demonstrated how discourses accessed by fathers might function to maintain gendered divisions in relation to parenting and work. In this chapter, discourse analysis was used to explore how men positioned themselves in relation to work and parenting, and to dive deeply into what their speech could reveal about the positions and choices they saw as most readily available to them. I identified that although they expressed a desire to be involved fathers, demonstrating wide-spread recognition of changing social and cultural expectations about fathers' involvement, often this did not transpire.

Participants' inability to, or decisions not to be, actively involved was accounted for in various ways, and suggested a tension between what fathers recognize they should be doing, and what they are doing, as parents. Of note, participants drew upon biological explanations for parenting behaviour, emphasising that mothers are 'naturally' better at care work and at bonding with very young children than are fathers. In drawing upon

such biological explanations these fathers framed their lack of involvement as something outside of their control; this allowed them to also claim that they really wanted to be involved in childcare activities and child rearing but could not. Positioning their female partners as genetically or biologically better at care and, thus, as the primary caregivers for their children, allowed fathers the option to take on or not take on caregiving. Further, it was emphasised that involvement in paid work functioned as an inhibitor to their involved fathering. Ultimately, most participants positioned paid work (and the role of father as provider) as preferential. Finally, the role that workplace culture and expectations played in their inability to be involved was also emphasised by the fathers. The prominence of the expectations of workplaces and broader social policy was apparent here, and the importance of a supportive workplace culture for men using flexibility for family reasons was indicated by the participants' responses. In general, most participants did not challenge these barriers; rather they used them as explanations for their lack of involvement. So, while workplaces present real barriers, they also provide fathers with the opportunity to privilege their involvement in paid work, and to account for why they cannot be more involved.

Following from considerations that the gendered nature of fathering identity and its connection to paid work was influential in identity constructions, Chapter 7 presents the findings of a collaboration between myself and Dr Sarah Hunter. During her PhD, Dr Hunter had a focus on how primary caregiving fathers were positioned and represented in parenting texts. This chapter aimed to provide a comparison of how working fathers and primary caregiving fathers spoke about and positioned themselves in relation to paid work and parenting. The chapter explores in more detail the expectation that fathers will financially provide for their families and proposes that this norm remains prominent even as expectations for father involvement are evolving. The

analysis suggests that, in general, both working fathers and primary caregiving fathers continue to position financial provision through paid work as their responsibility within the family unit. The collection of data from two separate sources providing similar results demonstrates the pervasiveness of this expectation for fathers. Primary caregiving fathers often performed this caregiving role because circumstances required them to rather than by choice; this idea of choice links to the finding in Chapter 6 that working fathers often position caregiving as optional.

In concluding Chapter 7, Dr Hunter and I proposed recommendations regarding men's greater involvement in caregiving, arguing the possibility that this may provide a destabilisation of masculinity as it is currently constituted. We argued that paid work continues to be socially valued, especially for men, and is one of the main ways in which men perform their masculinity; this makes greater involvement of men in caregiving difficult, particularly given that men appear to react to challenges to masculinity by emphasising and holding on to positions of social and cultural power. However, we further argued that policy changes which target men with specific periods of well-compensated paternity leave would provide more encouragement for men's greater involvement in caregiving. In turn, this may assist in expanding the repertoire for masculine identity, through exposing men to the lived experience of involved fathering and caregiving behaviours.

Finally, Chapter 8 presented analyses of interviews with senior managers within a range of organisations. The aim of this chapter was to elucidate how workplace flexibility remains gendered in nature, even when organisations present flexibility policies as gender neutral, and to provide a critical examination of the ways in which flexibility might be discussed and implemented within organisations.

Flexibility was found to be discussed primarily in relation to female employees, and thus implicitly positioned as for use by female, rather than male, employees. Further, flexibility was discussed as a way in which women could balance childcare and work, implicitly positioning women, but not men, as responsible for child rearing and thus entitled to flexibility. Discussions with senior managers also indicated that employees using flexibility were positioned as unable to dedicate themselves to paid work. Given the continued prominence and influence of the ideal worker norm and the importance of paid work to masculine identity, this assumption in the organisational context has the potential (and is likely) to dissuade men from using flexible working arrangements. In particular, these views appear to encourage men to use informal means of flexibility— and to be flexible about how they use flexibility—thus continuing to privilege paid work over child rearing. Further, men's ability to choose to use flexibility in this way reinforces the roles that men and women are expected to inhabit within families and organisations, maintaining the organisational and social power that men hold, and reinforcing the view of men as ideal workers (and women as carers). Ultimately, I argue that it is necessary to highlight how this occurs within organisations in order to be able to challenge it, and to ascertain ways in which gender can be made more visible.

9.2 Integration of Findings: What Do They Mean

Collectively, the findings from this research suggest that gendered expectations regarding parenting and work continue to be highly influential in men's use of flexible working arrangements. Further, it is clear that organisations and managers potentially have an influential role to play in breaking down gendered ideas and perspectives regarding flexibility within workplaces, and that this could assist in encouraging men's greater use of flexible working arrangements for family reasons.

A focus on how the findings of these chapters fit together confirms the perspective of the literature in Chapter 2: the gendered and cultural expectations within and outside of organisations interact to maintain a complex set of sometimes contradictory norms by which fathers operate. In Chapter 5, for example, some men reported stepping away from expectations of full-time paid work and engaging in part-time work; this constituted this group of men as the 'ground-breakers'. These men reported working in a way which, in a sense, subverted the ideal worker norm, because they allowed family responsibilities to curtail their working lives. However, they relied on traditionally masculine attributes in order to do this. In Chapter 8, there was evidence that gender expectations continue to be reproduced within workplaces, which encourages men to use flexibility in certain, gendered, ways. That flexibility continues to be discussed and at times implemented in gendered ways could, in many ways, counter the desire expressed by some men in this research to use flexibility for family reasons. This might also go some way to explaining the lower numbers of men using a formal form of flexible working arrangement in Australia (Baxter, 2013), and indicates that there is still a long way to go in terms of gender equality in workplaces and in parenting. Further, the demonstration in Chapters 5 and 7 that the ideal worker norm remains pervasive within organisations as well as the persistence of the idea that a father's role is to provide financially, assists in explaining why men and fathers in particular may be hesitant to utilise flexibility.

Relatedly, Chapters 6 and 7 highlight that men have substantial choice in how involved they are and how they approach parenting and caregiving behaviours. Though these chapters also highlight the structural and institutional factors which are influential in fathers' decision making in relation to work and parenting, they demonstrate that fathers often do not challenge these factors but rather use these cultural and structural

restrictions in order to explain their inability to be as involved as they indicate they would like to be. This is an important consideration when exploring how to more fully engage men in parenting. The connection between masculinity, fathering, and paid work is certainly an important and influential relationship, perhaps because men's engagement with it remains unchallenged.

Chapter 8 locates these ideas within the premise that organisational culture is one of the most important factors in men's use of flexibility. It takes the ideas and findings presented in the previous three chapters, particularly that gendered expectations in relation to paid work remain a strong influence on men's use of flexibility, and applies a gendered lens to the organisational context, as presented through managers' talk. It highlights that flexibility continues to be framed as something 'for women', rather than for all employees to use. This is an important consideration given that in Chapter 5 it was identified that working fathers had a lack of 'sense of entitlement' to flexibility. Again, these ideas around workplace flexibility being for women are not challenged; rather they are, for the most part, shored up through managers' talk. Perhaps these findings point to the need to make gender and its consequences (for women and men) more visible within the organisational environment. This suggestion will be explored further in section 9.5.2 of this chapter.

Chapters 5 and 6 present findings which support the notion that the breadwinner identity remains powerful for men in Australia (see also Baxter & Hewitt, 2013; Brennan, 2007, 2011; Pocock et al., 2013), and points to the need to address this and other cultural issues influencing ideas regarding fathering in Australia. As will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter, some researchers suggest that there is a need to reframe fathering as a combination of work and care, rather than one or the other.

This proposed framing may be especially useful in challenging men's continued ability to choose how involved in parenting they are. This kind of reframing would be made much more accessible if organisational expectations also changed, which Chapter 8 suggests may involve considerable effort.

Further, looking at the accounts given by participants in Chapter 6 demonstrates the discourses that are readily accessible to fathers when discussing parenting and work. These discourses provide valuable information about the culture within which fathers exist and the dominant understandings that are available to them in regard to work and parenting. The findings presented in Chapters 6 and 7 suggest that alternative discourses are required for fathers in Australia; specifically, that there is a particular need to promote and normalise alternatives to breadwinning identity to assist in diversifying the options fathers see as available to them in the performance of fathering. It appears that alternative discourses may assist in promoting involved fathering behaviour, in the sense that they may help to normalise this behaviour. However, the availability of alternative discourses also needs to be supported in practice, by men themselves, and by institutions which continue to reproduce and reify gendered patterns of parenting and work, as discussed in Chapter 8. The theoretical implications for these findings will be discussed in more detail below.

9.3 Overall Strengths and Limitations of the Research

Some of the strengths and limitations of this research have been discussed throughout the thesis, for example, in Chapters 3 and 4, and as part of the papers for publication in Chapters 5-8. I reiterate here, though, that the working fathers who were interviewed for the first study of this research were middle class, primarily white, heterosexual, Australian men. That these were men of a certain class, ethnicity, and

sexual orientation, who responded to invitations to be involved, to tell their stories and have them heard, says something about who may feel entitled to tell these stories. That these were the men who chose to volunteer their time and share their experiences, I argue, is a demonstration of the social capital that comes with their class, ethnicity, and sexual orientation. However, as stated in Chapter 4, these men's accounts and experiences still reveal much about fathering, fathering experiences, and negotiation of identity—and provide a good place to start collecting data on these topics, in part because of the men's readiness to share. Future research would benefit from attempting to recruit a more diverse cohort, because other views in relation to fathering are lacking in the Australian context (though, as I suggest this, I am aware that my position as a white, relatively well-educated woman may have proven to be a barrier to more diverse recruitment here).

It is also possible that these working fathers may have been expressing a desire to be more involved fathers because of the context of the research interview, because that was what they thought was 'required' of them for the research. There does appear to be a social shift towards men taking time off when their children are born but also being somewhat more involved subsequently than previous generations of fathers. Thus, the fathers participating in this research may have wanted to present themselves as adhering, or at least as wanting to adhere, to these emerging expectations. Nevertheless, it was heartening to hear accounts from participants regarding their desire to take time off. Many participants mentioned, at some point during the research process, that they thought it was a great thing that research was being done in this area because it was an important topic—and because they had not had many opportunities to discuss their fathering experiences. This was encouraging to hear, and represents a strength of the

research, in that it is advancing not only a less discussed topic but also promoting to these men that their experiences, and the fathering role, are valid and valued.

A similar point can be made in relation to the senior managers, who were interviewed for the second study of this research. In the context of the interview about flexible working arrangements, managers may have wanted to present a positive view of their employers, or to reproduce the 'company line' regarding support for and implementation of flexible arrangements within their organisations. These participants also belonged to a relatively privileged cohort, being senior within their organisations and occupying positions of relative power. I reflected on the possible implications of this in Chapter 4. However, it seemed as though, similar to the working fathers, most managers relished the opportunity to discuss and reflect upon their roles and the ways in which their organisations operated. Many managers thanked us for the opportunity to be involved and to think about what they may do differently in their roles going forward. On another note, I suggest that the data obtained from these participants allowed meaningful conclusions to be drawn, but having detailed transcriptions would have enabled a more fine-grained, critical analysis of the data. Future research could build on the findings of Chapter 8 by audio-recording interviews with managers and working from detailed transcripts.

This topic is complex, and has cross over with different areas of policy, health, wellbeing, organisational culture and management, gender, work, and family. For this reason, it was difficult to cover, and give credence to every factor which may have some influence on or connection to this issue. For example, factors such as childcare, marriage, and separation are related to this issue too. How these interactions play out also differs between families, cultures, and individuals (see Baxter, 2012a; Baxter,

2012b, 2012c, 2013a; Baxter, Weston, & Qu, 2011; Brady, 2018; Brady & Perales, 2016; Cooke & Baxter, 2010; Craig et al., 2016; Hammond, 2010; Hewitt & Baxter, 2015; Hewitt, Craig, & Baxter, 2012; Huerta et al., 2013; Maume, 2011; Natalier & Hewitt, 2010, 2014; Price-Robertson, Baxter, & Mathews, 2015). It is also worth mentioning that this research focused on fathers' caring responsibilities for children. Men may also have other caring responsibilities such as for spouses, elderly parents, and other immediate family members or relatives (although it is acknowlegded that women are also much more likely to perform these types of care - see Etters, Goodall, & Harrison, 2008; Lee & Porteous, 2002).

9.4 Implications for Theory

Based upon the findings of this research, I will discuss some implications for theory below. First, these findings suggest that the evolution of gender, and of masculinity specifically, is slowly occurring, but that there is much continuity of dominant past constructions. Secondly, these findings suggest that the evolution of gender, and of masculinity specifically, likely requires some form of 'complicit' masculinity—that is, masculinity which does not actively engage with hegemonic masculinity but which still benefits from it through passive endorsement (Ashley, 2011; Bach, 2019; Connell, 2005a; Mackenzie et al., 2017; see also Tanquerel & Grau-Grau, 2019). In the model of hegemonic masculinity, Connell (1987; see also 2005a) theorised that there is a dominant form of masculinity in societies (as well as a hegemonic form, which is the most revered form of masculinity) which is 'always constructed in relation to various subordinated masculinities as well as in relation to women' (1987, p. 184). Many men may not be in a position to perform hegemonic masculinity; however, passive consent, or complicity, with the concept and attributes of a hegemonic masculinity from the majority of men maintains its power. Connell theorised that this consent exists

because men as a whole benefit from a social order which privileges them: the implication of the 'complicity' of those who may not be able to construct a hegemonic masculine identity 'is that most men benefit from the subordination of women', thus there is little motivation to challenge this dominant norm (1987, p. 185; see also Eisen & Yamashita, 2017; Schrock & Schwalbe, 2009; Smiler, 2014; Suwada, 2017b; Wetherell & Edley, 1999).

In particular, Chapter 5 demonstrated that in stepping away from expected gender roles, men will continue to emphasise traditional masculine characteristics and qualities in their enactments of gender and their behaviour; this reproduction of certain characteristics of masculinity appears necessary to enable them to challenge aspects of masculinity which restrict their ability to engage with parenting in the ways they desire. The complicity and engagement with aspects of hegemonic masculinity in these actions, what this might mean for the evolution of masculinity, and the implications of this going forward, requires consideration. Finally, some implications of these findings for gender equality at work and at home will be discussed, particularly the possibility that women's emotional labour within workplaces and unpaid labour within the home will be recognised (and potentially reduced).

9.4.1 The Evolution of Masculinity and The Role FWA May Play

It is recognised among those researching in the field of men and masculinities that there is a need for masculinity to evolve in order for gender equality to be accomplished (Beasley, 2005, 2011; Coltrane, 1996, 2010; Ely & Padavic, 2007; Ely & Meyerson, 2000b, 2010; Flood, 2015, 2019; Folbre, 2009; Folbre & Bittman, 2004; Haas & Russell, 2015; Hearn, 2014a; Hochschild, 2012b; Howson, 2014; Kimmel, 2010; Messner, 2011, 2015, 2016; Padavic et al., 2019; Pease, 2010, 2012, 2015a; Schippers,

2007). This is discussed in some detail in Chapter 7, however will be explored further now.

In her book *Men Explain Things to Me* (2014), writer Rebecca Solnit employs the concept of a 'punctuated equilibrium' to describe feminism and ongoing attempts to bring about gender equality. First proposed by the nineteenth century geologist Clarence King (Aalto, 2004), punctuated equilibrium describes patterns of change that 'involve slow, quiet periods of relative stasis interrupted by turbulent intervals' (Solnit, 2014, p. 133). King saw these turbulent intervals, usually brought about by an event such as an environmental catastrophe, as forcing species to adapt to new and changing conditions. Solnit employs the concept to refer to the peaks and troughs seen in the history of feminism, in that it has gone through periods of progress, relative stasis, and periods of fight and progress again.

If we consider progress in relation to gender, and gender equity, in this way— that change needs to be catalysed and gain momentum—then we can think about gender as being receptive to evolution at certain points throughout history. This means that masculinity is capable of evolution, but sporadically, and perhaps could be thought about as more receptive to pressure to evolve at certain historical points.

This approach to the evolution of gender might also be thought of, as the philosopher Eckhart Tolle (2016) suggested, that change occurs when humans face a state of crisis; until this time people are content with the way things are (Kuhn, 1962). However, I would argue that change and resistance, rather than being linear and calibrated, need to be thought of as occurring at the same time, in the same society. There exist multiple masculinities (Beasley, 2005; Coles, 2009; Connell, 2005a; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Hearn, 2014a; Howson et al., 2013; Lusher & Robins, 2009,

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2010) and, in relation to hegemonic masculinity, some are subordinated or considered alternative (leaving aside the position of women). Thus, those in a society or culture who do not benefit from the status quo will not be content with the way things are at a given time. They have the ability to challenge, in ways big and small, without waiting for a 'crisis' per se (see, for example, Nentwich, Poppen, Schälin, & Vogt, 2013). The men we termed 'ground breakers' in Chapter 5, for example, provide a challenge to current restrictive masculine and fathering norms; however they also resist the challenges to their masculine identities that their differing subject positions may elicit. They do this through emphasising masculine characteristics and maintaining a strong connection to a traditionally masculine position of engagement with paid work. Here we can see both challenge to what these men saw as restrictive about masculinity and resistance to changes to masculine norms, as well as the effects of these changes on their gendered power.

Christine Beasley (2011; see also Howson et al., 2013) similarly wrote about the way in which she saw masculinity evolving. She argued that it will take small but persistent 'transgressions' of gender and masculine norms in order for change and progression to occur. This again points to the idea that it is not necessarily a crisis or major event that drives (or demands) change, but small, insistent, and constant transgressions which chip away at long-standing norms, and which may or may not be deliberate; what is needed is simply to establish that there is an alternative that might offer more freedom or variability in expression of self and identity.

Valentine and colleagues (2014) and Ahmed (2015) also discussed ideas around gender, specifically in relation to sexism, and the many ways in which sexism can appear to be evolving when it is merely becoming more covert. Here, sexism and the evolution

of sexism arguably echoes the trajectory that the evolution of gender may take. Valentine and colleagues (2014) argued that there is a need for sexism, and gender as a vehicle through which sexism is enacted, to be made explicit; however, gender and gendered power by its very nature is maintained by subtle, everyday actions and interactions which are difficult to pinpoint and so often difficult to challenge (see also Ahmed, 2015). Thus, the difficulty in challenging and evolving masculinity lies (although not exclusively) in both the gendered power from which men benefit and do not wish to lose, and in the often invisibility of the workings of masculinity. It is therefore necessary to continue to challenge the taken-for-granted.

Pease (2015a) suggested that we cannot treat men and women the same within an unequal structure, and that the differential nature of the ways in which men and women work and parent need to be highlighted and challenged. He further argued that there is a need to focus on men's individual behaviour, and on the choices they make in order to progress gender equality. In his chapter in *Engaging men in building gender equality,* Pease makes the point that when we focus on masculinity as the root cause of men's behaviour, we shift focus from men themselves; masculinity becomes the issue rather than men and men's practices–and the latter is really where change occurs (Pease, 2002, 2010, 2012; see also Waling, 2019). In short, thinking about masculinity can deflect from thinking about men.

Pease (2015) raised this idea in relation to men's violence against women, but the argument stands regarding men's behaviours in relation to work and parenting. In this thesis, the implications of men existing within a cultural and social milieu which encourages them to continue to engage in the taken-for-granted, and which rewards certain, privileged constructions of masculinity, is discussed at length; however, purely

focusing on the influence of broader culture removes responsibility and agency from the individual to make change by choosing differently. I argue that consideration of both the structural and agentic is needed to facilitate change; individuals are necessarily shaped by the structures in which they live, but they also have agency to challenge, resist, and change these structures (see Anleu, 1995; Berger & Luckman, 1991; Gergen, 1999; Giddens, 1989; Griswold, 2012). Pease (2014) similarly argued that we must recognise that there is merit and benefit in engaging in a dialogue about 'what's in it for men'. In the patriarchal social climate of Australia, an approach which combines the need to hold men responsible for their behaviour and encourage them to do better, along with recognition of the influences on that behaviour, seems necessary (see also Connell, 2013a; Gray & Nicholas, 2018; Kuchynka, Bosson, Vandello, & Puryear, 2018).

There is no simple or true answer to how the evolution of masculinity is best approached. Different approaches have positives and negatives for what they can theoretically offer for the evolution of gender broadly and masculinity specifically. However, the findings presented in this thesis suggest that there are fathers who are willing to challenge norms of work and parenting (albeit minimally) by using flexible working arrangements and this may, as Beasley (2011) suggested, facilitate more and larger transgressions of gender boundaries. Social and cultural discourse also points to a wider desire for change in this area (see, for example, Crabb, 2014; Fox, 2017; Praxis, 2015; Scheibling, 2018; Tatham, 2018; van der Gaag et al., 2019).

So, what do flexible working arrangements offer for the evolution of masculinity? A discussion of this requires a discussion of the ideal worker norm. Ladge and colleagues (2015) have suggested that fathers choosing to engage more fully with family evidences the weakening of worker identity, and a fading of the ideal worker

norm. However, these authors also found that fathers in their study still defined themselves as breadwinners and preferred to use informal forms of flexibility—often doing so 'by stealth', for example, by cutting their hours short here and there to pick up their children from school, rather than having a formal arrangement (see Reid, 2015). The tendency to use flexibility in this way is strongly echoed, and the consequences articulated, in the findings presented in Chapter 8 of this thesis.

As argued in Chapter 8, it thus appears likely that the ideal worker norm is simply being reinvented and becoming more subtle in its influence and expression. A great deal of research suggests that the ideal worker norm continues to be highly influential in the way that men work (Acker, 2012; Borgkvist, Moore, et al., 2018; Brumley, 2014, 2018; Coltrane et al., 2013; Correll et al., 2014; Davies & Frink, 2014; Dreyfus, 2013; Dumas & Sanchez-Burks, 2015; Kelly et al., 2010; Kmec et al., 2014; Lewis & Humbert, 2010; Reid, 2015; Sallee, 2012, 2013). The managers in my second study articulated ways in which men managed to use flexibility and still maintain strong connections to paid work, and were alert to the need to be perceived as able to maintain this connection. From this perspective, it does not appear that flexible working arrangements currently offer much in the way of the evolution of masculinity while men remain able to be flexible about how they use them.

A further concern when considering the utility of flexible working arrangements to facilitate gendered change, is that male managers have more power within organisations to create knowledges—that is, dominant taken-for-granted understandings—while women's experiences and knowledges are minimised (Acker, 1990; Alonso, 2018; Berdahl et al., 2018; Berdahl & Moon, 2013; Billing & Alvesson, 2014; Durbin, 2010, 2011; Durbin, Lovell, & Winters, 2008; Durbin & Tomlinson,

2010; Eagly & Carli, 2007; Eagly & Heilman, 2016; Hearn, 2014b; Kulik & Olekalns, 2012; Matos, O'Neill, & Lei, 2018; Rudman & Glick, 2008; van den Brink & Benschop, 2014; Whitehead, 2014). In addition, women are often excluded from work-related networks and knowledge exchanges (Cooper & Baird, 2015; Durbin, 2010), while being financially undervalued as well (Cooper, 2000; Durbin et al., 2008; Ely & Kimmel, 2018; Pham, Fitzpatrick, & Wagner, 2018; Phelan, Moss-Racusin, & Rudman, 2008; Rudman, 1998; Stone, 2008; Tracy & Rivera, 2010; Williams, Muller, & Kilanski, 2012). These conditions collectively and individually impact upon what knowledge is privileged and what knowledge comes to be known, comes to be seen as truth, and comes to be (re)produced (Kulik, Metz, & Gould, 2016). In part, the inherent privileging of male perspectives and knowledges within organisational spaces poses a further barrier to the acceptance of, and engagement with, discourses of care and use of flexibility by men.

The combination of these aspects of workplaces signal to men (and women) that organisations continue to want ideal workers and strongly discourage ways of working which might suggest that they are not fully dedicated to paid work. Men are good at reading this expectation, not least because they learn these lessons from other men in the organisational environment, and they are also attuned to how women's ways of combining work and care is de-valued (see Ahmed, 2015; Lee, 2018; Warren & Lyonette, 2018). Given that some men in this research expressed a desire to (and some did) utilise flexibility, if these tensions between work and care within workplaces can be addressed, flexible working arrangements may be able to play a part in facilitating social change and offer a way forward for the evolution of masculinity. Nonetheless, flexible work arrangements, on their own, are not likely to achieve change.

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9.4.2 Complicit Masculinity and the 'Ground-Breaker' Discourse

The previous sections argued that men are resistant to gendered change and find, often unconsciously or implicitly, ways to maintain gendered power and privilege. Chapter 5 presented findings that there were some fathers who were stepping away from full-time paid work by choice, namely, the 'ground-breakers'. How they did this and the implications of their positioning warrants further discussion.

The results discussed in Chapter 5 suggest that there needs to be some kind of complicity with hegemonic masculinity to enable 'ground-breakers'. That is, men appear to need to build up masculine capital (Connell, 2005a; Hearn, 2014b; Ivana, 2017; Tanquerel & Grau-Grau, 2019; Walumbwa & Christensen, 2013) to allow them to challenge the dominant and taken-for-granted (Ahmed, 2007b; Blair-Loy & Cech, 2017; Minow, 1990) within their workplaces and within their social groups. These 'ground-breaker' men, when taking up non-normative, subordinated positions in relation to hegemonic masculinity (i.e., increased caregiving), still drew upon masculine characteristics to account for their actions.

Connell (2005a, p. 79) describes complicit masculinity as a space where men who may not be able to achieve a hegemonic masculinity (through performance of hegemonic traits) still reap the benefits of it through their, often passive, endorsement. In this context, Connell conceptualised complicity as being able to maintain hegemonic masculinity, and the patriarchal gender structure, through implicit support of the tenants of hegemonic masculinity and through failure to challenge hegemonic masculinity. The men engaging with the 'ground-breaker' discourse (in Chapter 5), although challenging some aspects of hegemonic masculinity, also draw upon other aspects of it to account

for their positions, and thus they remain complicit in the propagation of a hegemonic form of masculinity.

There appeared to be an awareness on the part of the working fathers involved in my first study that they needed to continue to enact a masculinity that was seen as hegemonic, to maintain masculine capital, even as their decisions to step into more feminised positions provided a challenge to hegemonic enactment of masculinity and fathering. However, being complicit with hegemonic masculinity in some ways enabled the 'ground-breaker' men to maintain positions through which they had power and masculine capital to enact a challenge to hegemonic masculinity and to taken-for-granted notions of fathering. These men drew on, and therefore reproduced, dominant notions of masculinity, while their actions also had the potential to extend, reframe, and redefine these notions. Thus, they were complicit in, and beneficiaries of, hegemonic masculinity, but it is the very power and privilege inherent in this that creates a space in which they have the ability to challenge the norms of masculinity.

What a reliance on these traditional notions of masculinity also accomplishes, though, is similar to what has been found in research into how men who work in feminised occupations often negotiate masculine identity. Their emphasis of attributes which shore up masculinity (see Henson & Rogers, 2001; Hrženjak, 2013; Lamont, 2015) allows them to distance themselves from femininity; there is thus debate about whether engagement with masculine attributes can be an effective way to incorporate traditionally feminine aspects, including caregiving, into masculine and fathering identities (thus expanding what masculinity is and means).

Ruth Simpson (2009, 2011, 2014), for example, argued that men working in feminised occupations (such as childcare, teaching, and nursing) can both 'do' and

'undo' gender while trying to negotiate their identities in roles which present a mismatch between their constructed gender identities and the gendered expectations of employees in those positions (see also Eisen & Yamashita, 2017; Perra & Ruspini, 2013; Pullen & Knights, 2007; Pullen & Simpson, 2009). Working in these occupations, men were challenging restrictive gender expectations about the type of work that they could do and that matched their gender performances (see also Brody, 2015). However, Simpson noted that these men would also engage in behaviours and performances which were concomitant with hegemonic masculinity (see also Pease, 2011, 2015b). Simpson argued that these performances of a more traditional or expected gender identity in certain aspects of these jobs, served to maintain masculine conformity and the performance of an accepted, hegemonic masculinity.

Perhaps a theoretical compromise is to acknowledge that it might be necessary for men to engage with aspects of hegemonic masculinity because it remains the culturally accepted and expected ideal, in order to accrue the social capital required to challenge it and be heard. Particularly in Australia, and in societies where traditional characteristics and expressions of masculinity are highly culturally valued, there may be less opportunity to accrue the capital required to form a basis for challenge without being complicit with the dominant masculine ideal.

Engagement with the 'ground-breaker' discourse could thus work in the same way as described by Beasley (2011) above, whereby more challenges and eventual acceptance of 'transgressions' of masculinity lead to masculinity evolving. However, Schrock and Schwalbe (2009) observed that men learn to perform masculinity from other men, and when hegemonic masculinity is modelled it can reproduce gender inequality, providing permission for other men to engage in it as well (see also Ashley,

2011; Connell, 2005a; Mackenzie et al., 2017; Pease, 2010). Valentine and colleagues (2014) also suggested that this may encourage men to engage with hegemonic masculinity in more subtle ways and hegemonic masculinity may thus shift in its socially and culturally accepted form. So, given the apparent need for men to accumulate masculine capital to subsequently step away from privileged positions, it seems men cannot be involved in the evolution of masculinity without complicity with hegemonic masculinity in some form.

The 'ground-breaker' discourse, then, may function to acknowledge the perceived need by men to engage with the ideal of hegemonic masculinity, to be complicit in some aspects, but also to suggest that there is more that they could be doing. For example, men may require a certain amount of masculine capital to allow them to step away from, or deviate from, accepted masculine norms, or to 'offset' this deviation. However, the 'ground-breaker' discourse incorporates a perceived need to further the horizons of hegemonic masculine ideals, and emphasises the value of doing fathering outside of current gendered expectations and norms. Emphasising the need for and value in active father involvement through all stages of a child's life, may be one way to encourage the integration of care work into masculinity and assist in progressing an evolved masculine identity. That is, the ability to better perform their fathering role may appeal to the culturally masculine characteristics of psychological strength and perseverance, and encourage potential 'ground-breakers'. It should be noted, though, that the need for more active fathering is something women have been raising for many decades (see Beauvoir, 1988; Fisher & Tronto, 1990; Folbre & Bittman, 2004; Kanter, 1977; Miller, 2017; Ridgeway, 1997; Ridgeway & Correll, 2004; Tronto, 2010). Expanding dominant norms of masculinity to include active fathering may provide a way of increasing engagement with this concept.

9.4.3 Valuing Care: Progressing Gender Equality at Work and at Home

As highlighted in Chapter 2, women perform the majority of unpaid labour in both workplaces and homes, including unpaid care work, and they continue to be disadvantaged by the maintenance of the current gender structure. From a societal perspective, if we are able to encourage more men to see the value and engage more in taking on the unpaid care work and labour that women are currently doing, this has the potential to, at least in part, unburden women.

Coles and colleagues (2018) suggested that, when discussing fathering roles, we need to rethink the binary of breadwinner/involved father, such that the language around this binary is reworked. They suggested that framing the fathering role more as a combination of work *and* care, as some fathers in their study demonstrated, may alleviate men feeling as though they must perform fathering as one or the other. This is an important consideration when asking what flexible working arrangements may offer for the evolution of masculinity. Broadening the idea of care and fathers' roles in care may help in countering the need that fathers express to be the financial provider for their families, and also to work long hours to adhere to organisational expectations— effectively precluding them from being involved fathers (see also Lewis, Gambles, & Rapoport, 2007). It is apparent that a re-conception of the way work and care are considered needs to be incorporated into the way organisations function. After all, as research suggests that employees are more productive and more committed when their familial needs are considered and supported by organisations, this should promote rather than weaken employees' organisational commitment as well as productivity (see Alkahtani, 2015; Gatrell, Burnett, Cooper, & Sparrow, 2013; Joyce et al., 2010; Pocock, 2005a; WGEA, 2014).

Changing what is acceptable, what is a norm within cultures, can come from behaviour and discourse (Edley, 2001; Griswold, 2012; Wetherell & Edley, 2014). One way, then, to change the current narrative around work and care may be to emphasise and centralise considerations of care across all institutions. Petra Bueskens (2018b) suggested that the concept of the centrality of care, centralising the requirements of parents to care, is important within organisational contexts. The notion of centralising care and the need for employees to provide care in their home lives highlight a way in which organisational requirements (work) and home requirements (care and family life) could co-exist; this may assist in providing an alternative subject position for men to see as available to them. Given that fathers continue to position themselves as 'helpers' and as secondary to their female partners in care provision (Borgkvist, Eliott, et al., 2018; Brady et al., 2017; Miller, 2010; Riggs & Bartholomaeus, 2018; Rose et al., 2015; Singleton & Maher, 2005), centralising care requirements may also encourage men to see care as done by themselves rather than as done by their partners.

Bueskens (2018a, 2018b) and O'Reilly (2016) advocated for this co-existence in terms of a 'matricentric feminism', which recognises and subsequently aims to progress feminist advocacy for a view of mother as separate in experience from woman; O'Reilly suggested that this concept could provide a framework for centralising the experiences of mothers within workplaces. Broadening the idea of care as central to fathers may also assist in shifting cultural norms and expectations around who provides and who is primarily responsible for care. Conceptualising care in this way, and providing well defined and supported opportunities for fathers to take up these caring positions through the use of FWA within workplaces, provides men with the opportunity to experience the subject position of 'breadsharer' (Reid, 2018) and to shape their identities around a more egalitarian sense of sharing care and financial provision.

This concept of centralising care demonstrates a way in which care and work can co-exist (see Deutsch, 2007). Anne Manne (2018) takes this idea one step further, suggesting that there is a need to develop an ethos of a 'Universal Caregiver', elevating social and cultural reward and admiration for caregiving and care work above that of paid work——and in the process adequately recognising and respecting that women have historically performed and continue to perform most of this unpaid work (see also Chou, Kröger, & Pu, 2016). In making this argument, Manne drew upon the ideas of Marilyn Waring (1988a) and Nancy Folbre (1993, 2009; Folbre & Bittman, 2004), and their critiques of the ways in which many societies benefit from, yet fail to fairly acknowledge and regard, women's unpaid care work.

However, as the present thesis and other research has demonstrated, men may re-appropriate engagement with feminised spheres and behaviours such that masculine attributes of those positions are emphasised in order to counter threat to or loss of masculine capital. If men continue to emphasise masculine attributes in relation to childrearing, emotionality, and the use of flexible work arrangements for family reasons, one potential consequence is that as a society and culture masculinist attributes will continue to be revered (see Allen & Hawkins, 1999; Carter, 2018; McBride et al., 2005; Miller, 2012; Snitker, 2018; Thagaard, 1997). This would reduce the incentive for men to step away from and challenge these aspects of gender—because they continue to benefit from them and from enacting them.

Masculine re-appropriation may be especially likely to occur in Australia where traditional gendered familial roles remain deeply culturally entrenched (Baxter & Hewitt, 2013). If we also consider studies such as Veronica Tichenor's (1999, 2005) interviews with breadwinning wives, women too can continue to do gender in ways

which maintain men's privileged positions so as to not seem too threatening, powerful, or dominant. In this sense, challenging masculinity requires both men and women to question what they have learned about gender while gender identities are re-negotiated, and to challenge the socialisation which encourages men to establish and enact a certain kind of masculinity—though within a patriarchal social structure this is a difficult task (see Carter, 2018; Connell, 2005b; Pedulla & Thébaud, 2015; Thagaard, 1997; van Hooff, 2011).

The above raises important questions about the potential implications, not only for women's positions within workplaces, but also for the intuitive knowledge and desire that is it assumed women possess in relation to caregiving. What this might mean for women and for mothers needs to be considered. Further, given the strong cultural link which is socially constructed between women's identities and caregiving (Bear, 2018; Beauvoir, 1988; Bueskens, 2018a; Hochschild, 2012a; Miller, 2005; Pedulla & Thébaud, 2015; Ridgeway, 2009; Ridgeway & Correll, 2004; Robnett, Daniels, & Leaper, 2018; Sunderland, 2006), we may see some women shifting and negotiating their identities in response to men taking up maternal spaces (potentially) in masculine ways. The potential for this to occur warrants further consideration, and, at the very least, how fathering and mothering identities will change shape and flow together in the future will be an important consideration in future research.

9.5 Implications for Policy and Practice

Below, I will discuss some practical and policy implications for the findings of this research, and how the theoretical implications discussed above might translate into something tangible for policy and practice. These findings appear to suggest that some men are willing to step away from paid work, challenging organisational norms, and, in

doing so, present the possibility of enacting and promoting a 'new normal' (see Calderone, 2018; Counsel, 2015; Tramonte, 2017). However, for a 'new normal' to take hold will require many more men to step away from paid work and take part in caregiving. This will require a commitment from organisations generally within Australia, perhaps beginning with larger organisations initially, to elevate and promote the expectation that fathers should be more involved in caregiving. In particular, I will discuss: the need to introduce and implement both practically and financially supportive policy specifically targeted at men; and the potential that multiple pressure points will reduce some of the fluidity that men see themselves as having around their parenting role.

9.5.1 The need for broad policy implementation across institutions

The results of this thesis suggest that traditional ideas about parenting and work strongly persist in Australia, and, in order to challenge these ideas, we need to consider how they might be addressed on a broad social and cultural level. Some of the reasons research suggests it is important for men to use flexibility, and to take time off after the birth of a child, were covered in Chapter 2; Chapter 6 also demonstrated why fathers, as well as children themselves and families more broadly, can benefit from fathers taking time off. The research presented here resonates with Rehel's (2014) work, which found that her participants who did not take time off 'retained an understanding of infant care as undemanding and non-labour intensive' (p. 125). Though a few of my participants who took extended leave still had this viewpoint, it has been suggested that providing the opportunity to have and exposing fathers to these early experiences has a lasting impact (Doucet, 2006, 2015; Haas & Hwang, 2008; Lee & Lee, 2016; Miller, 2011; Nepomnyaschy & Waldfogel, 2007; Ranson, 2012; Tanaka & Waldfogel, 2007; Wall,

2014). Particularly in the Australian context, Hosking and colleagues (2010) found that when fathers took time off when a child was born (up to four weeks), this increased the likelihood that they would subsequently engage in sole care on weekends.

Gatrell and Dermott (2018) argued that work-life balance tends to be talked about negatively; working towards changing this narrative, towards discussing work-life balance as something that can be enriching, may assist in encouraging more fathers to utilise flexible working arrangements. Policy change and media campaigns endorsing this narrative may help to cement it. Moving away from the use of flexibility as something which can negatively impact careers, and promoting the narrative that flexibility is beneficial for life both outside and inside of organisations, may prove an advantageous way forward (see also Lewis et al., 2007). However, this would, again, require commitment from organisations, government, and other sectors.

One of the factors identified in this research as affecting men's uptake of flexibility, was that men did not feel flexibility was for them to use. Add this lack of 'sense of entitlement' to flexibility (Gatrell & Cooper, 2016; Gatrell et al., 2014b; Lewis, 1997; Lewis & Smithson, 2001) to the gendered policy approach to family in Australia (which will be discussed in more detail in the next section), and it is apparent that there is a distinct lack of positioning of men as needing to be involved in family life. Governmental policy change represents a broad and overarching lever that has the potential to normalise and thus encourage men to use flexibility and parental leave, and to encourage support for it across sectors and industries—additionally, challenging the narrative around mothers' responsibility for care.

The Scandinavian countries are an example of how providing alternative discourses and subject positions for men through policy implementation can encourage

men to take these positions up, and assist in evolving gender roles. Brandth and Kvande (1998, 2001, 2002, 2009, 2011, 2016, 2018a, 2018b, 2019) have conducted research in Norway across the past three decades demonstrating these changes in policy and the resulting increase in fathers using parental leave, flexibility, and being more involved in family life (Allard et al., 2007; Haas et al., 2002; Haas & Hwang, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2016; Haas & Rostgaard, 2011; Lammi-Taskula, 2008; Miller, 2013; Suwada, 2017a; Valarino, Duvander, Haas, & Neyer, 2018). Sweden in particular has seen a large increase in numbers of fathers using parental leave and flexibility after the birth of children as a result of policy change, so much so that this has come to be an accepted and expected norm (Haas & Hwang, 2008, 2016; Haas & Rostgaard, 2011; Tatham, 2018). Importantly, the change in social norms and expectations was facilitated by a change in government policy which encouraged uptake of parental leave by fathers. In most Scandinavian countries men currently receive numerous months of paid parental leave at up to 80% of their usual salaries under a 'use it or lose it' policy (OECD, 2016), and they have the option of utilising this well after the child is school-aged.

As long as Australia continues to avoid implementing workable financially and culturally supportive family policies, the male breadwinner model will persist. The Scandinavian countries have demonstrated that culture change through policy implementation is possible, and O'Brien (2013) reported that a targeted policy initiative can be effective even in countries with a strong breadwinner ideology (see also Suwada, 2017a). Suwada (2017b) argued that while there are new obligations for fathers, they often are not provided the support required to let go of the old and meet the new obligations arising in an evolving world. Thus, in order to encourage fathers to step away from paid work and engage more fully in fathering, policies need to convey the value

associated with that role. Policies targeted at fathers would provide the cultural support associated with a governmental initiative, and practical, financial support also.

Notably, Brandth and Kvande's research demonstrated that these changes are still evolving, and require generational change (see also Suwada, 2017b). It is therefore an important consideration that policy interventions are not without implications (that are sometimes problematic or unintended) and require continued evaluation and modification (see Brandth & Kvande, 1998; Brandth & Kvande, 2009, 2016; see also Haas & Hwang, 2008; Haas & Rostgaard, 2011).

9.5.2 Gendered policies, gendered outcomes

The current Paid Parental Leave (PPL) policy in Australia maintains gendered family relations (see, for example, Brennan, 2011; Dreyfus, 2013). The Australian Government-funded PPL scheme offers 18 weeks leave to the primary carer, paid at minimum wage. In 2013, Dad and Partner Pay (DPP) was introduced for secondary carers, to be taken at the same time as the primary carer, and again paid at the minimum wage (Martin et al., 2014). Employers can also offer their own paid parental leave should they choose, although few do.

While the PPL scheme for primary carers presents as gender neutral, this policy can be seen to facilitate women taking time off from work to care while not providing adequate support for fathers to do the same (see, for example, Huerta et al., 2013; Martin et al., 2014; Pocock et al., 2013). The primary carer for the first 18 weeks of a child's life is much more likely to be a woman, in part because women need to physically recover after giving birth and may choose to breastfeed, and in part because women are likely to earn less than their male partners. Women are consequently much more likely

to take the whole 18 weeks of PPL, and this is reflected in the very low numbers of Australian men who utilise any PPL: approximately 2-3% (OECD, 2016). Further, if a father's employer does not offer paid parental leave, they are put in the position of taking unpaid leave or using annual or personal leave if they want to take more than 2 weeks off work when their child is born. Australia's current PPL and DPP schemes essentially encourage one carer to be at home providing care, and this is usually the mother. Further, if fathers do take unpaid leave or even leave paid at minimum wage, this is often not enough financial support for families. Given the cultural value that continues to be placed on breadwinner status, and the probability that a male partner will be, overall, earning more than his female partner, the DPP initiative falls short of offering an adequate solution to the issue of fathers taking parental leave.

The move within Australia to emphasise gender-neutral polices is an example of a tendency to shy away from challenging and deconstructing overarching power structures, such as patriarchy and gender (Bacchi, 1999; Brennan, 2011; Pocock, 2005a, 2005b; Pocock et al., 2013; Pocock et al., 2012; Skinner et al., 2014; Werth, 2011). The failure to challenge and critique these structural constraints on both men and women allows gendered norms, expectations, and consequences to continue to influence the familial structure. In most instances, even though Western countries have seen pushes for wage and gender equality in workplaces (Cooper & Baird, 2015; Gould et al., 2018; Hearn & Collinson, 2006; Hoobler, Lemmon, & Wayne, 2011, 2014; Kerfoot & Knights, 1993; Kulik et al., 2016; Stojmenovska, 2019; Stojmenovska, Bol, & Leopold, 2017; Whitehead, 2014; Yanadori, Gould, & Kulik, 2018), women still focus on part-time work and family life (to a greater extent than men), and are still encouraged, including through policy, to perform the majority of caregiving (see Werth, 2011).

For the most part, then, women are still held responsible for family life. Pushing for equality in the workforce, and continuing to hold women responsible for family life, are largely incompatible. But, further, the present state of family policy in Australia, and how parents are positioned by these policies, means that women's assumed primacy in the domestic sphere functions to make equality in the workforce very difficult to achieve. While these policies endure, the discourse that one parent alone needs to provide financially (while the other, usually the mother, provides care) maintains the cultural prominence of and reliance upon the male breadwinner model. Bringing these taken-for-granted consequences to the fore and challenging them are necessary to address the gendered consequences of policy that we currently see in Australian families.

Brandth and Kvande (2009, 2011, 2018, 2019) discussed the need to have gendered policies, including the need to have policies targeted at fathers. Policies which carve out months during which fathers can take on the caring role for children make it clear that fathers matter in care, whilst challenging expectations that mothers will and should take on the majority of care (see also Birkett & Forbes, 2019; O'Brien, 2009, 2013). As mentioned, in Scandinavia, this approach has led to an increase in fathers taking longer periods of parental leave. It could further be argued that making gender visible could lead to more recognition of the unpaid, invisible work that women do and encourage men to take on more of this (see Colley & White, 2018).

Part of making gender visible, and providing cultural support for father involvement, will be removing language like 'primary' and 'secondary' carer from Australia's family policies. To encourage the idea of shared care, or of a 'Universal Carer' as Manne (2018) suggested, the discourse of the primary carer needs to be

challenged (see also Waring, 1988a, 1988b). This challenge is also essential because, if one parent is positioned as the primary caregiver through policy, this means we are implicitly positioning them as the more engaged, more knowledgeable, more skilled parent. This parent is usually the mother, in part because it is assumed that mothers are naturally more adept at caring (and so should be the primary carer) (Dermott, 2008; Gorman & Mosseri, 2019; Miller, 2010, 2011, 2017; Pedulla & Thébaud, 2015; Suwada, 2017b). Chapter 6 demonstrated that these kinds of discourses can contribute to fathers positioning themselves as secondary carers, and it is incredibly important to challenge and breakdown this language if fathers are to be encouraged to take on more caregiving responsibilities. In fact, some private organisations are removing this language from their policies, offering Paid Parental Leave to all new parents (Priestley, 2019; Women's-Agenda, 2019).

Policy change specifically at the governmental level, and consideration of gender in policy, thus represent important facilitators not only in encouraging fathers to take parental leave but also in promoting father involvement and shared care in children's lives in the longer term. Within Australia, there is a need to show fathers that their involvement is valuable and that time off from paid work for family reasons is a workplace entitlement that should be used by all. This must start with more inclusive and supportive policy at the governmental level, with the hope that, as was the case in Sweden, broad culture change will follow.

9.5.3 What will it take to stop ideal worker expectations?

As long as workplaces remain masculine spaces and continue to benefit from men adhering to gendered norms and roles, men will remain under pressure to adhere to these gendered expectations. As a result, when men use flexible working arrangements,

they will continue to use them in ways which do not bring their dedication to paid work into question. The ideal worker norm and its continued pervasiveness within organisations is something which needs to be challenged in order for men to choose to work differently, and for women not to be seen as lesser employees.

There is a move towards encouraging workplaces to recognize the contribution they make to poor mental health and wellbeing of their employees. This move comes on the back of a great deal of research highlighting the pervasiveness of stress and poor mental health among employees who work long hours, and also those who have little control over their working conditions and work-life balance (Baxter, 2012a; Becher & Dollard, 2016; Golden, 2012; Haar, Russo, Suñe, & Ollier-Malaterre, 2014; Joyce et al., 2010; Potter, O'Keeffe, Leka, & Dollard, 2019; Thorley, 2017). However, highlighting of this issue has also led to a discourse of individualisation of the risk management of these issues, pushing employees themselves to manage and alleviate their own wellbeing and mental health concerns (see Allvin, Aronsson, Hagstrom, Johansson, & Lundberg, 2011; Fishwick & Curran, 2016).

As discussed in Chapter 2 of this thesis, these issues have widespread societal consequences. When citizens suffer from poor mental health and wellbeing, high stress levels, and other associated health concerns, this often impacts upon their engagement within their communities, homes, and within their workplaces (Cooklin, Westrupp, & Strazdins, 2016; Cooklin et al., 2015; Danna & Griffin, 1999; Haar & Bardoel, 2008; Hewitt et al., 2012; Pocock et al., 2012; Rönkä et al., 2017; Wang & Repetti, 2014). According to research conducted by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), Australia men work longer than average hours (OECD, 2018).

This makes long working hours and overwork cultures within organisations a public health concern.

Although there are many possible policy approaches to the issue of increasing men's use of flexible working arrangements, the application of penalties to organisations who do not take adequate steps to prevent harm to their employees appears to be what it has taken in the past to shift approaches to health issues within workplaces (see Dembe, 2009; Freeman, LaFleur, Booth, Doyle, & Pugh, 2001; SWA, 2019). Physical injuries within workplaces, for example, have been shown to reduce greatly after laws enacted penalties against organisations that did not take appropriate steps to prevent employee injury on the job (Foley, Silverstein, Polissar, & Neradilek, 2009; Laitinen & Paivarinta, 2010; Lipscomb, Li, & Dement, 2003; Smitha, Kirk, Oestenstad, Brown, & Lee, 2001), although organisational context may affect the uptake and impact of regulations (Parker, 2004; Wells & Greenall, 2005).

While societally we approach physical injury from a public health, preventative perspective, mental health and wellbeing in relation to overwork and stress is not currently or typically approached in this same way. Applying a penalty to organisations when their employees experience overwork, stress, and other mental health and wellbeing deficits may be what it takes for the ideal worker norm to be meaningfully reformed by organisations. The ideal worker norm persists because there remains a *perceived* benefit to organisations when employees work long hours (Cha & Weeden, 2014; Folbre, 2009; newsdesk, 2012; Strazdins, 2016; Strazdins et al., 2016), even though employees are often less productive when working long hours (Golden, 2012). Until this structural imbalance between the organisation and employee is addressed through policy and legislation, it is highly likely that organisations will continue to value

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their financial bottom line over employee health and wellbeing (see, for example, Connell, 2006a; Folbre, 2009; Gregory & Milner, 2009; Lewis & Humbert, 2010; Sørensen, 2017).

One consideration here is that, since the industrial revolution, much of the way modern, Western societies function is based upon production. Altering this long-standing view of paid work means altering organisational expectations and approaches to employee health and wellbeing, as opposed to solely valuing an economic bottom line; this is not an easy task (see Baxter, 2012a; Danna & Griffin, 1999; Emmett, 1997; Hewitt et al., 2012; Lewis et al., 2007; newsdesk, 2012; Potter et al., 2019; Strazdins et al., 2016). As Schulte et al. (2015) highlighted, 'the challenge in making workforce well-being a focus of public health and ultimately societal expectation is that it requires multiple disciplines and stakeholder groups to interact, communicate, and ultimately work together' (p. 41).

Perhaps this will require a similar approach to the 'valuing of care', discussed earlier in this chapter; a different discourse around paid work, that repositions the overall valuing of paid work, may elevate the concept of a more reciprocal employee-employer relationship. Research indicates that younger generations are challenging the idea of living to work (Balestra, Boarini, & Tosetto, 2018; Greer & Peterson, 2013; see also Hoole & Bonnema, 2015; Lewis et al., 2007; Thorley, 2017), and wanting a work-life balance that will enable more time to focus on personal endeavours. In addition, a body of research is accumulating which demonstrates the business case for a safe and healthy psychosocial working environment (see Comcare, 2010; O'Neill, 2014). This approach from researchers and from younger generations of men and women wanting to work differently might lead to shifts in the way work is seen, and what employers need to

offer tangibly to attract and retain employees, such that the overwork of employees becomes a less desirable option for organisations.

9.6 Conclusion

The main message from this research may be that things are staying the same as much as they are changing. The challenge appears to be to identify and harness the conditions and the facilitators of change and to use them to provide further momentum for transformation. However, resistance to change of this kind—that is, resistance to change in relation to gender roles and expectations, and particularly change which may reduce the social and cultural power that men have—is very persistent. The subtleness of the everyday ways that gender norms are maintained is one of the biggest challenges in this area of research, policy, and practice. In attempting to encourage men's use of flexible working arrangements for family reasons, it is necessary to name and challenge the subtle ways in which institutions, and social and cultural structures, perpetuate gendered ways of living; this is very difficult to do and, particularly for men, to see.

If it is accepted that harnessing men's ability to change and men's 'transgressions' of the status quo represent the way forward, we need to continue to investigate how this change can and could occur. Recent demonstrations of collective action present a possibility for facilitating broad change (see Tatham, 2018); however, there is always the question of how men's individual lived experiences can be, and whether they are, reconciled with the structural influences they experience. With so many structural influences on men's behaviour, how men can make change collectively, and be encouraged to be involved in change, will be an interesting and important question for the future.

The research findings and literature presented in this thesis suggests that we are tentatively moving towards greater gender equality within workplaces and a greater ability of men to comfortably and confidently use flexible working arrangements for family reasons. However, there remain many obstacles and much resistance moving forward. Changes in relation to understandings of gender need to occur increment by increment, transgression by transgression, until retrospectively we are able to see comparatively major changes. Currently, men hold too much social and cultural power for a major change to gain traction, and the bonds of patriarchy will not allow enough men to support a change which will perceivably reduce that power (see Flood, 2015).

It is undeniable that masculinity, and the expectations associated with masculinity, need to evolve, both for men to utilise flexible working arrangements free from cultural expectations in relation to their work and fathering identities, and for gender equality to be attained. Breaking the association between paid work, the breadwinner role, masculinity, and fathering identity is a large part of this, particularly in Australia. Facilitating and realizing a challenge to this association is about providing viable alternatives—alternatives that are valued, and culturally, practically, and financially supported. The Scandinavian countries have shown that the provision of such alternatives can make a difference in the types of roles and behaviours fathers perform within families. Though research in these countries has also shown that men in general, and fathers specifically, still engage in what could be described as traditional performances of masculine identity, their masculine and fathering ideals have evolved beyond what this thesis and other research suggests is currently possible in Australia. Steps will need to be taken to catalyse the evolution of the traditional fathering role to go beyond that of a breadwinner and to challenge the expression of fathering and masculinity primarily through dedication to paid work.

As bell hooks wrote:

[i]t is not true that men are unwilling to change. It is true that many men are afraid to change. It is true that masses of men have not even begun to look at the ways that patriarchy keeps them from knowing themselves, from being in touch with their feelings, from loving. To know love, men must be able to let go the will to dominate. They must be able to choose life over death. They must be willing to change (2004, p. xvii).

It is up to each of us, individually and collectively as a society, to facilitate and support this change.

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Appendices

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

PROJECT TITLE: An analysis of men's uptake of flexible leave polices in the workplace
HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE APPROVAL NUMBER: H-2015-128
PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Dr Shona Crabb
STUDENT RESEARCHER: Ms Ashlee Borgkvist
STUDENT'S DEGREE: PhD

You are invited to participate in the research project described below. Please read this information sheet carefully.

What is the project about?
This project is investigating men's uptake of flexible leave policies in the workplace. It is interested in what enablers, facilitators and barriers men experience when accessing these policies, how their workplaces may influence use of these policies, and how use of these policies interacts with their family responsibilities.
The project aims to determine how the numbers of men taking up flexible leave policies for family reasons can be improved, and what individual and organisational factors may be able to assist in this.

Who is undertaking the project?
This project is being conducted by PhD Candidate, Ms Ashlee Borgkvist, as part of the requirements of her degree.
This research is conducted through the University of Adelaide, under the supervision of Dr Shona Crabb, Professor Vivienne Moore, and Dr Jaklin Eliott.

Why am I being invited to participate?
You are being invited to participate because you fit the inclusion criteria for the project. To be included in this project participants must be:
- A working male
- Aged 18 or over
- Have at least one child between the ages of 1 and 12 years old
- Able and willing to provide informed consent

What will I be asked to do?

This project involves filling out a short questionnaire and then participating in an interview with Ashlee. In the questionnaire you will be asked some demographic questions, including questions about your current relationship status, your age, how many children you have and their ages. In the interview you will be asked questions relating to work, family, fatherhood and your experience of these. The interviews will be conducted at the University of Adelaide North Terrace Campus, but other locations can be arranged to suit individual preferences. The interviews will be audio recorded to ensure that we have an accurate record of the information you provide and so that the student researcher can later transcribe what is said for analysis.

How much time will the project take?
The interview will take approximately 30-60 minutes. There will be a short questionnaire prior to the interview which will take approximately 5 minutes to complete.
If you give permission, we would like to retain your contact information to invite you to participate in a possible subsequent study.

Are there any risks associated with participating in this project?
The researchers foresee only minor risks associated with participation in this project. You will be required to volunteer your time travelling to and from and participating in the interview, which may be a minor inconvenience.
Some emotional distress or discomfort may be experienced depending on what is discussed in the interview. We can pause or stop the interview at any point if this happens. If you feel you need to talk to someone after the interview has been completed you can contact the counselling services *Lifeline* on 13 11 14 or *Beyond Blue* on 1300 22 4636.

What are the benefits of the research project?
There are no immediate benefits to you in this project. However, this research may result in a greater understanding of the facilitators and barriers to men's uptake of flexible work policies and how men feel about using them. This information may then be used to understand how men's uptake of these polices could be improved. It is hoped that this knowledge could lead to long term benefits in this area for men and their families.

Can I withdraw from the project?
Participation in this project is completely voluntary. If you agree to participate, you can withdraw from the study at any time.
If you do choose to withdraw, it will be possible to withdraw your data only up until submission of any journal article resulting from the research, and up to submission of the PhD.

What will happen to my information?
The information you provide will be audio recorded during the interview and the student researcher will later transcribe it word for word. So that you cannot be identified, you will be assigned a different name. Your signed consent form and demographic information will be stored in a locked cupboard at the School of Population Health and the audio recordings will be kept on a secure, password protected server. The student researcher and other researchers involved in the project will have access to this information. It will be kept for 5 years from the date of any publication resulting from the research.

No identifying information will be used in any publications resulting from this research, which will include the student researchers PhD dissertation and may include journal articles. A copy of the resulting journal article can be emailed to participants at their request.

Who do I contact if I have questions about the project?
If you have any questions about the project, the contact details of all researchers involved are listed below. In the first instance, please contact the student researcher:

1) Student Researcher: Ms Ashlee Borgkvist
          Email: ashlee.borgkvist@adelaide.edu.au
          Phone:
2) Principal Investigator: Dr Shona Crabb
          Email: shona.crabb@adelaide.edu.au
          Phone:

3) Co-Researcher: Professor Vivienne Moore
          Email: vivienne.moore@adelaide.edu.au
          Phone:
4) Co-Researcher: Dr Jaklin Eliott
          Email: jaklin.eliott@adelaide.edu.au
          Phone:

What if I have a complaint or any concerns?
The study has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee at the University of Adelaide (approval number H-2015-128). If you have questions or problems associated with the practical aspects of your participation in the project, or wish to raise a concern or complaint about the project, then you should consult the Principal Investigator Dr Shona Crabb on phone +61 8 8313 1686 or by email to shona.crabb@adelaide.edu.au. Contact the Human Research Ethics Committee's Secretariat on phone +61 8 8313 6028 or by email to hrec@adelaide.edu.au. if you wish to speak with an independent person regarding concerns or a complaint, the University's policy on research involving human participants, or your rights as a participant. Any complaint or concern will be treated in confidence and fully investigated. You will be informed of the outcome.

If I want to participate, what do I do?
If you would like to participate in this research, please contact Ms Ashlee Borgkvist by email to organise an interview time and location, ashlee.borgkvist@adelaide.edu.au.

Thank you for your interest.

Yours sincerely,

Ms Ashlee Borgkvist   Dr Shona Crabb   Professor Vivienne Moore

Dr Jaklin Eliott

PROJECT TITLE: An analysis of men's uptake of flexible leave polices in the workplace
HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE APPROVAL NUMBER: H-2015-128

Socio-demographic Form

Please complete the below questions to the best of your ability.

Age: _____ years old

Gender: _____ / Do not wish to specify

I identify my ethnicity as: _____ / Do not wish to specify

Nationality: _____

My current job status is (please circle):

- Full-time
- Part-time
- Casual
- Other: _____

    Occupation: _____

    My current relationship status is (please cirle):

- Married
- De Facto
- Living with partner
- Not living with partner
- Single
- Do not wish to specify
    How many children do you have: _____

What are the ages of your child/children: _____

Are you currently using a formal flexible work policy: _____

Thank you. We will now begin the interview.

PROJECT TITLE: An analysis of men's uptake of flexible leave polices in the workplace
HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE APPROVAL NUMBER: H-2015-128

Interview Questions — Participants Using Flexible Work Policies

*Questions with an asterix are intended for all participants.

*Could you tell me about your household and parenting arrangements?

*What do you feel has changed the most for you since you became a father?

These questions will be asked of participants using flexible work policies:

How do you feel using flexible work policies has changed your work life, if at all?

How do you feel using flexible work policies has changed your home life, if at all?

Who do you feel has been the most supportive of your use of these policies?

How have they supported you?

What did this support mean for you?

Is there anyone else in your workplace who has or is using these policies as well?

Tell me about what influenced your decision. Did you face any difficulties when making this decision?

These questions will be asked of those not using flexible work policies:

Could you tell me if you think your work-life balance could be improved, and how?

Would you consider, or have you considered, using a flexible work policy?

Could you please tell me about what influenced your decision not to use one. Did you face difficulties when making the decision not to use a flexible work policy?

Are there people you work with who have or who are using flexible work policies?

What do you think about their use of those policies?

*How does your career fit in with your family life? Has this changed in any way?

*Do you think about work when you are not at work?

*How would you describe your workplace's approach to work-life balance?

*What would your ideal arrangement with work be to enable you to do what you want to with your family?

*Is this a possibility for you now?

*How do you think your workplace could better support your ideal arrangement?

*Is there anything else that you feel wasn't covered that you would like to discuss or that you think is important for this research?

*Do you feel or think that there have been any impacts on your health as a result of your current work arrangement?

*Is there anything that we haven't covered that you'd like to talk about or that you think is important to discuss?

Thank you for your time and participation.

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

PROJECT TITLE: How do supervisors perceive and manage employees' requests for flexible working arrangements?
HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE APPROVAL NUMBER: H-2016-146
PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Prof Vivienne Moore
STUDENT RESEARCHER: Ms Ashlee Borgkvist
STUDENT'S DEGREE: PhD

You are invited to participate in the research project described below. Please read this information sheet carefully.

What is the project about?
This project is investigating supervisors' experiences of receiving, approving, and managing requests for flexible working arrangements from their employees. It is interested in what supervisors describe as factors influencing their decisions, and also in investigating whether these factors differ across industries. The project aims to gain an understanding of different supervisor's experiences, and to determine what organisations might be able to do to best support supervisors in relation to employee requests for flexible working arrangements.

Who is undertaking the project?
This project is being conducted by PhD Candidate, Ms Ashlee Borgkvist, as part of the requirements of her degree. This research is conducted through the University of Adelaide, under the supervision of Professor Vivienne Moore, Dr Jaklin Eliott, and Dr Shona Crabb.

Why am I being invited to participate?
You are being invited to participate because you fit the inclusion criteria for the project. To be included in this project participants must be:
- Aged 18 or over
- Working within an organisation
- Working at a supervisory level and be responsible for 4 or more employees
- Have at least one manager or supervisor above them
- Responsible for receiving, approving, and managing requests for flexible working arrangements
- Able and willing to provide informed consent

What will I be asked to do?

This project involves filling out a short questionnaire and then participating in an interview with Ashlee. In the questionnaire you will be asked some demographic questions, including questions about your current work status, your age, and how many employees you currently supervise. In the interview you will be asked questions relating to work, employees' requests for flexible working arrangements, your managers, and your experience of these. The interviews will be conducted at the University of Adelaide North Terrace Campus, but other locations can be arranged to suit individual preferences. The interviews will be audio recorded to ensure that we have an accurate record of the information you provide and so that the student researcher can later transcribe what is said for analysis.

How much time will the project take?

The interview will take approximately 30-60 minutes. There will be a short questionnaire prior to the interview which will take approximately 5 minutes to complete.

Are there any risks associated with participating in this project?

The researchers foresee only minor risks associated with participation in this project. You will be required to volunteer your time in the interview, and dependent on your preferences, some time travelling to and from the interview, which may be a minor inconvenience.

Some emotional distress or discomfort may be experienced depending on what is discussed in the interview. We can pause or stop the interview at any point if this happens. If you feel you need to talk to someone after the interview has been completed you can contact the counselling services *Lifeline* on 13 11 14 or *Beyond Blue* on 1300 22 4636.

What are the benefits of the research project?

There are no immediate benefits to you in this project. However, this research may result in a greater understanding of the ways that supervisors experience their positions within the workplace, and the ways in which they make decisions in relation to requests for flexible working arrangements from employees. This has the potential to reveal possible ways in which organisations may be able to provide more assistance or support for supervisors, long term and across a range of industries.

Can I withdraw from the project?

Participation in this project is completely voluntary. If you agree to participate, you can withdraw from the study at any time prior to submission of any journal article resulting from the research, and the PhD.

What will happen to my information?

The information you provide will be audio recorded during the interview and the student researcher will later transcribe it word for word. So that you cannot be identified, you will be assigned a different name. Your signed consent form and demographic information will be stored in a locked filing cabinet at the School of Public Health and the audio recordings will be kept on a secure, password protected server. Only the student researcher will have access to this identifying material, which will be kept for 5 years from the date of any publication resulting from the research.

No identifying information will be used in any publications resulting from this research, which will include Ashlee's PhD dissertation and may include conference presentations and journal articles. A copy of the resulting journal article can be emailed to you at your request. Please be aware that every precaution will be taken to protect the confidentiality of the information that you provide, however your anonymity cannot be guaranteed.

Who do I contact if I have questions about the project?
If you have any questions about the project, the contact details of all researchers involved are listed below. In the first instance, please contact the student researcher:
5) Student Researcher: Ms Ashlee Borgkvist
        Email: ashlee.borgkvist@adelaide.edu.au
        Phone:
6) Principal Investigator: Professor Vivienne Moore
        Email: vivienne.moore@adelaide.edu.au
        Phone:
7) Co-Researcher: Dr Jaklin Eliott
        Email: jaklin.eliott@adelaide.edu.au
        Phone:
8) Co-Researcher: Dr Shona Crabb
        Email: shona.crabb@adelaide.edu.au
        Phone:

What if I have a complaint or any concerns?
The study has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee at the University of Adelaide (approval number H-2016-146). If you have questions or problems associated with the practical aspects of your participation in the project, or wish to raise a concern or complaint about the project, then you should consult the Principal Investigator Prof Vivienne Moore on phone +61 8 8313 4605 or by email to vivienne.moore@adelaide.edu.au. Contact the Human Research Ethics Committee's Secretariat on phone +61 8 8313 6028 or by email to hrec@adelaide.edu.au. if you wish to speak with an independent person regarding concerns or a complaint, the University's policy on research involving human participants, or your rights as a participant. Any complaint or concern will be treated in confidence and fully investigated. You will be informed of the outcome.

If I want to participate, what do I do?
If you would like to participate in this research, please contact Ms Ashlee Borgkvist by email to organise an interview time and location, ashlee.borgkvist@adelaide.edu.au.

Thank you for your interest.

Yours sincerely,

Ms Ashlee Borgkvist

Interview Schedule:

PROJECT TITLE: How do supervisors perceive and manage employees' requests for flexible working arrangements?
HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE APPROVAL NUMBER: H-2016-146

Interview Questions

Would you mind describing your position within the organisation and what your day to day duties might include?

What flexible working arrangements does your organisation offer?

How beneficial, if at all, do you think flexible working arrangements are for the organisation and for employees?

How important do you think flexible working arrangements are to your employees?

How important, if at all, do you think flexible working arrangements are for the organisation?

How would you describe the overall approach of your organisation to flexible working arrangements?

Have your views and approach to flexible working arrangements changed since you became a supervisor? How have they changed?

What sorts of things do you consider when you receive requests for flexible working arrangements from employees?

Can you talk me through what would happen after you receive a request for a flexible working arrangement from an employee?

If you have employees who are using a flexible working arrangement, how do you manage these alternative arrangements?

What do you think contributes to employee's decisions to request a flexible working arrangement?

What do you think about the current level of organizational support provided to you in making these decisions? How could this work better? What sorts of things would help?

If you were drafting policy to cover this, what sorts of things would you put in there?

[If they are themselves accessing FWA]: Do you think it is important for your staff to see you using a flexible working arrangement?

[If they are not accessing an FWA]: Have you ever considered FWA for yourself? Why? Why not?

Is there anything else you would like to say about managing these requests for FWA.

Appendix C

Study 1: Working Fathers

Participant Information Table

Participant #/Pseudonym	Age	Occupation	Relationship Status	Number /Age of children (in years)	Flexible Working Arrangement
1 – Mike	40	Program Officer	Married	2/6, 4	No
2 – Mark	38	Call centre	Married	3/5, 3, 0.5	Informal
3 – Carl	33	Administration Officer	Married	1/3, 1 on way	No
4 – David	45	Community Planner	Married	3/10, 8, 3	Informal
5 – Ernie	52	Community Planner	Married	2/16, 12	Informal
6 – Frank	43	Journalist	Married	2/9, 6	No
7 – Gary	33	Financial Manager	Married	2/8, 6	No
8 – Harry	39	Senior Lecturer	Married	3/10,8,3	No
9 – Jerry	46	IT Consultant	Married	3/21,19, 7	No
10 - Kieran	39	Communications	Married	2/2, 4, 1 on way	Part-time – 4 days per week
11 – Larry	36	Researcher	Married	2/5, 3	Part-time – 4 days per week
12 – Nick	42	Team Leader	Married	2/8, 6	No
13 – Oscar	41	Administration Officer	Married	1/ 2	Part-time – 4 days per week
14 – Phil	51	Social worker	Married	3/17, 14, 17m	No
15 – Ross	46	Scientist/Manager	De facto	4/15, 13, 4, 3	No

Study 2: Senior Managers

Participant Information Table

Participant #/Participant Pseudonym	Organisation/Industry	Role	Tenure at org.
1 – Jake	Banking	Regional General Manager	10 years
2 – Adrian	Banking	Regional General Manager	8 years
3 – Rosa	Engineering/Project Management Firm	Manager People, Environment and Culture (HR)	5 years
4 – Teddy	Banking	Regional General Manager	15 years
5 – Gina	Banking	State General Manager	12 years
6 – Raymond	Insurance Company	Senior Manager	3 years
7 – Amy	Insurance Company	Senior Manager	4 months
8 – Charles	Insurance Company	Senior Manager	7 years
9 – Terry	Insurance Company	Senior Manager	4 months
10 – Kevin	Insurance Company	Senior Manager	7 years
11 – Marcus	Manufacturing and Packaging Company	Group General Manager	7 years
12 – Doug	Insurance Company	Senior Manager	15 years

Article

Constructions of Primary Caregiving Fathers in Popular Parenting Texts

Sarah C. Hunter[1], Damien W. Riggs[2],
and Martha Augoustinos[1]

Abstract
Expectations and norms of fatherhood are evolving, with fathers now expected to be more involved in childcare. These changes have made it possible for a growing number of fathers to assume a primary caregiving role. Catering to these fathers, a growing number of books have been published focusing on primary caregiving fathers. The present article reports on a discourse analysis of nine such books. Four interpretative repertoires were identified, suggesting very specific ways in which it is deemed appropriate for men to take on primary caregiving. The findings emphasize the need to pay ongoing attention to popular parenting texts since, despite claims they encourage and support involved models of fathering, the books present and reproduce potentially limited accounts of fathers who are primary caregivers. As such, the findings highlight the importance of being critical of claims that fatherhood is evolving, given such evolution may be mitigated by ongoing normativity with regard to fathering.

Keywords
fathering, stay-at-home dads, hegemonic masculinity, masculinities

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Title	Author(s)	Year of publication
Daddy, Where's Your Vagina? What I Learned as a Stay-at-Home Dad	Joe Schatz	2009
Captain Dad: The Manly Art of Stay-at-Home Parenting	Pat Byrnes	2013
Dad or Alive: Confessions of an Unexpected Stay-at-Home Dad	Adrian Kulp	2013
Hear Me Roar: The Story of a Stay-at-Home Dad	Ben Robertson	2012
Cinderfella: My Life as a Stay-at-Home Dad	Marcus Mastin	2010
The Stay at Home Dad Handbook	Peter Baylies and Jessica Toonkel	2004
Stay-at-Home Dads: The Essential Guide to Creating the New Family	Libby Gill	2001
The Stay @ Home Dad: 200+ Tips and Hints to Running Your Household	Paul Cookson	2013
Full Time Father: How to Succeed as a Stay at Home Dad	Richard Hallows	2004

Nine fathering books analysed in Hunter, Riggs and Augoustinos (2017)