Constructions of primary caregiving fathers and masculinities

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Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

November 2017

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Abstract

This thesis presents a discursive analysis of constructions and representations of primary caregiving fathers in popular parenting texts and Australian newsprint media. Primary caregiving fathers are increasingly the focus of both academic and cultural interest and this interest stems from the argument that there are shifting understandings and practices of fatherhood. Fathers are argued to be shifting away from traditional, provider models of fathering, toward a new and involved model where fathers can express a more nurturing side.

In addition to the changing nature and practice of fatherhood, there have been arguments that this change reflects and contributes to simultaneous changes in masculinities. Hegemonic masculinity – the form of masculinity that maintains men's dominance – has long informed traditional definitions of fathers as the distant, financial provider. However, the concept of hegemonic masculinity cannot account for the experiences of primary caregiving fathers, as these fathers typically step away from the financial provider role. The literature therefore argues that there has been a shift away from hegemonic forms of masculinity and towards one that has been termed a "caring masculinity".

The analyses in this thesis draw on a social constructionist and discursive approach to explore the constructions of masculinities and primary caregiving fathers in order to better understand and account for the experiences of these fathers. Taking this approach allowed for a focus on how fatherhood is a complex cultural and ideological construction that is continuously negotiated and constructed. In particular, three analytic chapters are concerned with the constructions and accounts of primary caregiving fathers in parenting texts published for

these fathers and Australian newsprint media. The analyses focus on interpretative repertoires, ideological dilemmas and membership categorisation devices deployed in the data. The analytic findings indicate that:

- Despite claims to encourage and promote primary caregiving fathers, parenting texts suggest very specific ways in which it is deemed appropriate for men to take on the primary caregiving role.
- Media accounts of primary caregiving fathers rest upon a principle/practice dichotomy of endorsing new and involved fathering in theory, but reproduce considerations that suggest it is unrealistic and impracticable.
- The category – primary caregiving father – is fluid and flexible and can be reworked to position these fathers as both within and transgressive of normative masculine and fathering boundaries.

This thesis concludes by discussing the implications of these constructions in relation to contemporary conceptualisations and practices of fathering and masculinities.

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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Acknowledgements

This thesis was made possible due to a number of important people.

I firstly want to acknowledge and thank my supervisors – Damien and Martha. I appreciate the time and commitment you have given my research endeavours. I would not be where I am today without your guidance. A special thank you Damien for your insane turnaround time on drafts, it never ceased to amaze me.

To my family, although you may never quite understand what I have been doing for the past 4 years, I appreciate your relentless support and faith in me.

Jordan, your listening skills have undoubtedly saved me many days and our "power hours" are likely where I achieved most of my work. Thank you!

And of course, Stef. There is absolutely no way I could have gone on this journey without you. You have been through every step of this process with me, both emotionally and practically. For the all the ideas I ran by you, all the drafts you read, and all the time we spent together working (not working) and complaining. There is no one else I would have wanted to do this with.

Chapter 1: Introduction and contextualising the research

Overview

This thesis is concerned with fathering and masculinities. It has been argued that Western contemporary societies are seeing ongoing shifts in understandings and practices of fathering (Doucet & Merla, 2007; Duckworth & Buzzanell, 2009; Johansson & Andreasson, 2017; Latshaw & Hale, 2015; Rochlen, Suizzo, McKelley & Scaringi, 2008). Such shifts necessitate continued explorations of dominant constructions and understandings of masculinity. Specifically, given that researchers have argued that there is a shift toward a more nurturing and caring masculinity (Elliott, 2015), the aim in this thesis is to explore in depth contemporary constructions of masculinities and fatherhood, and evaluate the ways in which involved fathering is currently understood. This will be achieved by examining the discourses that construct and surround primary caregiving fathers, given that masculinity is best understood as the everyday practices and discourses that make intelligible particular understandings of what it means to be a man (Medved, 2016). The decision to focus on primary caregiving fathers was made for two main reasons. Firstly, they are increasing in prevalence, and secondly, they are gaining cultural and academic interest.

It is worth stating at the outset, that this thesis has only included and considered research on two-parent heterosexual couples, where the father is the primary caregiver. Whilst gay fathers and/or sole-parent fathers also typically fulfil the role of primary caregiver, the social expectations and norms faced by these fathers are distinctly different. This is because gay fathers and sole-parent fathers are expected to provide primary care (because they are the only adults – or more specifically only men – in the household). Conversely, within two-parent heterosexual couples, it is still normatively expected that

mothers will be the primary caregiver (Medved, 2016). Therefore, men who are primary caregivers in the context of heterosexual relationships are often seen as challenging social expectations, and accordingly face a unique experience within contemporary society. It is for these reasons that heterosexual men who are the primary caregiver in the context of a heterosexual relationship are the focus of this thesis.

In order to determine the prevalence of primary caregiving fathers, it is important to first establish what population of fathers are being referred to. The literature, when taken together, largely refer to primary caregiving fathers as "stay-at-home" dads or fathers. However, when using this term, the literature is not simply referring to fathers who are not engaged in the workforce and who are solely providing care to children. Rather, the literature refers to a group of men who have varying and complex configuration of work-family balances. It is precisely this ambiguity as to who is included when referring to primary caregiving fathers that makes determining their prevalence so difficult.

Based on figures released from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) in 2013, what we can discern is that the number of fathers fulfilling the role of primary caregiver is growing. The ABS indicates that there are up to 144,000 fathers within two-parent heterosexual couples who are primary caregivers. This is an increase compared from 91,900 primary caregiving fathers in 1993. In addition, the ABS estimate that there are 156,000 sole-parent fathers and 658 gay couples providing primary care for their children. Taken together, then, fathers as primary caregivers currently constitute just over 9% of all Australian families that have dependent children under the age of 15.

The steady increase in fathers taking on the primary caregiving role is also documented in other countries. The 2014 U.S. Census Bureau identified 211,000 two-parent heterosexual couples who identified fathers as the primary caregiver. This was an increase from 154,000 in 2010 (U.S Census Bureau, 2014). Similar figures were found in the UK,

with men accounting for 10% of those in two-parent heterosexual couples who provide primary care for their children (Office for National Statistics, 2012). It was estimated that 227,000 men provide primary care in 2012, a rise of 19,000 compared from 2011 (Office for National Statistics, 2012).

Whilst fathers who assume the caregiving role are increasing in prevalence, the numbers are still quite small, and difficult to accurately capture. What is significant, however, is the growing cultural and academic interest surrounding this population of fathers. This interest derives from these fathers departing from the commonly held view of fathers as the "secondary" parent. Doucet (2009) explained how there is a strongly established assumption that women are primary caregivers, and men are secondary "helpers". Even though this assumption is subject to variation across cultural and social situations, as well that it is beginning to evolve, this assumption is still commonly made in everyday situations (Doucet, 2009). Caregiving is viewed as discretionary for fathers; it is viewed as optional (Maurer & Pleck, 2006). This is because caregiving is still viewed as feminine, that it is women's work, and thus not a responsibility of fathers (Maurer & Pleck, 2006). Due to this, fathers are seen as able to choose between being a financial provider and sharing the responsibilities of work and family with their partner (Nentwich, 2008). Mothers, however, do not get to choose whether or not they want responsibility for children, they can only choose if they are a full time mother or simultaneously work (Nentwich, 2008). The idea that mothers are the main parent has resulted in fathers as primary caregivers remaining a minority.

Significantly, Thompson, Lee and Adams (2013) recognised how even the academic literature has largely ignored fathering as a legitimate focus of research for men, and emphasised how little importance caregiving is given when thinking of men. More explicitly, family experts have been shown to view mothering as a societal duty, however fatherhood is viewed as more of a personal choice (Vuori, 2009). This idea can also cause significant

difficulty when fathers are the primary caregiver. Chesley (2011) identified how mothers who work full time felt distressed about whether they were spending enough time with their children, as their partner was the one providing all the care. These types of discussions emphasise how mothers worry about their role when they are the financial provider, as they are expected to be the primary parent. It is precisely this view of fathers as secondary parents that makes primary caregiving fathers of particular interest. Such perspectives make clear how difficult this role may be for fathers. Not only are primary caregiving fathers departing from what other "normal" fathers are doing, but they are departing from what is expected of them.

Given this background, the research presented in this thesis will focus on exploring constructions of primary caregiving fathers, specifically in the context of parenting texts and in Australian news media. This chapter provides an extensive overview of the relevant background literature in order to contextualise the analyses that follow in later chapters. Following this, an overview of some particular theoretical considerations and the overarching theoretical approach will be provided. Then, the decision to use parenting texts and Australian newsprint media as data will be justified. Following, there is a discussion of the broad analytic approach, and the specific analytic approach of each paper. Finally, the aims of the thesis will be provided, and an overview of the chapters to follow presented.

Empirical research

This section examines previous empirical literature surrounding primary caregiving fathers. This literature is best contextualised as research that has sought to describe and explain which men take on the primary caregiving role, and why. Specifically, this literature has been divided here into three broad sections. The first section examines the research that has explored the motivating reasons and decision making process of fathers who take on the

primary caregiving role. The second section explores the variety of reactions and attitudes (both positive and negative) toward fathers who take on this role. Finally, the third section explores the variety of compensatory actions and behaviours fathers engage in when they take on the primary caregiving role.

Motivations: Why do men become primary caregivers?

Initially, research focused primarily on exploring the reasons why men are increasingly becoming primary caregivers. Given the previously outlined normative assumptions about caregiving, it is not surprising that research has sought to account for the decision-making practices of men who provide primary care. The main motivations that have been identified are 1) economic factors (i.e. the partner's income and the cost of childcare), 2) education and employment (i.e. job instability, job dissatisfaction, partner's education and career, and career success), 3) parenting values, 4) role of fathers' own parents, 5) the desire to be a caregiver, and 7) miscellaneous factors. These seven reasons will be examined in turn. Following this, an exploration into research that has explored the decision making process will be presented. To end this section, there will be a brief discussion of accounts of what is framed as "maternal gatekeeping". While it is not a reason why fathers take on the primary caregiving role, maternal gatekeeping frequently comes up as a factor as to why more fathers are not primary caregivers.

The leading explanations discussed in the literature for why fathers are assuming the primary caregiving role, relate to economic factors, employment, and education. Some of the earliest research that sought to explore experiences of primary caregiver fathers often referred to these fathers as those who had lost their job and their partner had to continue to work or return to work as the cost of childcare was too high (Penfold, 1985).

So from the outset, economic factors and employment were assumed to be the leading

reasons as to why fathers would take on a primary caregiving role. More recent research has confirmed that economic factors and employment are the most influential reason for fathers to provide primary care. Specifically, research has suggested that fathers take on the role when their partners earn more money and their single income was sufficient (Burkstrand-Reid, 2012; Chesley, 2011; Doucet, 2004; Doucet & Merla, 2007; Dunn, Rochlen & O'Brien, 2013; Fischer & Anderson, 2012; Grbich, 1992, 1997; Harrington et al., 2012; Kramer & Kramer, 2016; Merla, 2008; Roberts-Holmes, 2009; Rochlen, McKelley & Whittaker, 2010; Rochlen, Suizzo, McKelley & Scaringi, 2008; Solomon, 2014; Wall, Aboim & Marinho, 2007; West et al., 2009; Wolff, Pak, Meeske, Worden & Katz, 2011; Zimmerman, 2000).

Another economic consideration is the cost of childcare. Research suggests that fathers take on the primary caregiving role when the cost of childcare is too much and their partner's income was sufficient compared with two incomes and the cost of childcare (Burkstrand-Reid, 2012; Doucet, 2004; Doucet & Merla, 2007; West et al., 2009).

Following income, education and career trajectory has been shown as another significant influence. Within heterosexual couples where the father is the primary caregiver, mothers typically have a significantly higher level of education, and so fathers make the choice to assume a caregiving role, so that mothers can pursue their career (Kramer, Kelly & McCulloch, 2013; Kramer & Kramer, 2016). More generally, though, many studies have demonstrated that fathers take on a caregiving role when their partner was comparatively more invested in their career (Chesley, 2011; Doucet, 2004; Doucet & Merla, 2007; Dunn, Rochlen & O'Brien, 2013; Fischer & Anderson, 2012; Grbich, 1992; 1997; Merla, 2008; Solomon, 2014; West et al., 2009). Further, primary caregiver fathers report they take on this role so that their career-oriented partners would agree to have children at all (Solomon, 2014). Fathers are also likely to assume a primary caregiving role when they have negative attitudes toward work due to low career prospects, poor working conditions or job instability,

and when their partners have a rewarding work experience (Chesley, 2011; Dunn, Rochlen & O'Brien, 2013; Fischer & Anderson, 2012; Grbich 1992; 1997; Harrington et al., 2012; Merla, 2008; Wall, Aboim & Marinho, 2007; West et al., 2009).

While economic factors, employment, and education significantly influence the decision for fathers to become primary caregivers, the literature has noted parenting values also contribute to the decision for a father to provide primary care. In other words, research has shown that both parents in the context of a primary caregiver father household emphasise the importance of at least one parent being at home and providing full time care for their children (Doucet, 2004; Doucet & Merla, 2007; Dunn, Rochlen & O'Brien, 2013; Fischer & Anderson, 2012; Harrington et al., 2012; Merla, 2008; Rochlen, McKelley & Whittaker, 2010; Rochlen, Suizzo, McKelley & Scaringi, 2008; Solomon, 2014; West et al., 2009; Zimmerman, 2000). It is clear to see, then, that there is interplay between factors. It could be argued that parenting values are the leading factor, where parents feel it is most important to have one parent providing primary care. However, economic factors are the leading influence on which parent provides this care.

Research has also explored whether a father's own upbringing influences their understandings of and subsequent decision of caregiving and parenting. Grbich's (1997) Australian research explored the impact of historical and cultural influences, such as prior socialisation, on the decision to take on the primary caregiving role. It was suggested that a father's own childhood experiences of parenting largely influences their decision (Grbich, 1997). For example, either previous pleasant or unpleasant experiences of one's own father's involvement, can motivate men to either emulate or change their own parenting practices. There were however some limitations of Grbich's (1997) data that resulted in being unable to definitively identify any specific influences.

Research since then, however, has identified that a father's own parents being either

emotionally distant or physically absent, and in some cases violent, can lead to men being motivated to be more involved in caregiving (Merla, 2008; West et al., 2009; Wolff et al., 2011). Similarly, a father raised by a single parent has been found as a factor. It has been shown that this influences fathers' beliefs around the importance of family and children: fathers raised by single parents saw how difficult it was to raise a child alone and so they wanted to ensure this did not happen in their own family (Wolff et al., 2011). It was also identified that fathers were more motivated to take on a caregiving role if they had previous experience in a caregiving role, such as for a younger sibling, cousin, nephew, or other children (Waller, 2009; West et al., 2009).

This type of research has significant implications for understanding and influencing fathers increasing involvement in caregiving. Recognising the influence of fathering and caregiving experiences highlights the social and cultural nature of fathering and indicates an entry point to intervene and encourage increasing father involvement.

A significant factor, and one that thankfully has not been excluded in the literature, is a father's desire to be a primary caregiver. Much of the research has focused on identifying pragmatic factors that contribute to fathers assuming the caregiving role. However, a significant motivating factor is whether fathers want to be highly involved in child rearing (Burkstrand-Reid, 2012; Doucet, 2004; Fischer & Anderson, 2012; Grbich, 1992, 1997; Kramer, Kelly & McCulloch, 2013; Roberts-Holmes, 2009; Solomon, 2014; Waller, 2009; Wolff et al., 2011).

In all of these studies, fathers reported that they desired to leave the workforce to assume a primary caregiving role, and when the opportunity presented, they readily and openly took on this role. However, it is significant to note that whilst fathers desired the caregiving role, this desire did not solely contribute to them taking on the role. Rather, in order for fathers to actually take on the caregiving role, other factors were considered such as

economic factors, education, and employment of both themselves and their partners. For example, Grbich (1997) found that a lot of the men in her study wanted to take on the primary caregiving role, however the immediate factors that influenced their decision were related to employment and economic considerations.

Not only fathers' willingness, but their desire, to be primary caregivers is important. This acknowledges shifting understandings of contemporary fatherhood, and changing cultural and social norms, to allow fathers to express this desire to be caregivers. However, the desire to be a caregiver is not sufficient in itself to result in assuming the caregiving role thus indicating that contemporary understandings of fatherhood are not evolving as rapidly as may be suggested.

In addition to the factors already discussed, research has also identified a variety of other factors, specific to their particular studies. For example, Merla (2008) identified the role of a father's partner. Some fathers explained that they would not have considered taking on the caregiving role if their partner had not insisted they take on more responsibility with caregiving (Merla, 2008). Further, one study identified a mothers' inability to provide primary care as a factor (Wolff et al., 2011). The fathers in this study expressed that their partner was unable to care for their child(ren) due to reasons such as mental or physical illness. One other final factor resulting in fathers taking on the caregiving role is if their child required particular or specialised support for certain health, physical or developmental needs (Doucet, 2004; Doucet & Merla, 2007; Fischer & Anderson, 2012).

It is clear that much research has sought to examine why fathers are taking on the primary caregiving role. It is well established in the literature that economic factors, education and employment, parenting values, fathering and caregiving experiences, the desire to be a caregiver, and a variety of miscellaneous factors, point to why fathers are increasingly taking on the primary caregiving role.

Interestingly, three studies went a step further, and sought to examine fathers' decision making process or transition (Doucet, 2016; Grbich, 1997; Rochlen, Suizzo, McKelley & Scaringi, 2008). Grbich (1997) identified three particular ways in which fathers become primary caregivers. Firstly, the decision was planned, secondly, the transition was gradual and over time, and finally, the decision was unanticipated and quick. Significantly, of the 25 couples in this study, only nine had planned in advance for fathers to assume the primary caregiving role. Ten of the couples had slowly transitioned into the father as primary caregiver dynamic, and the final six couples took on this dynamic as a result of sudden changes in circumstances. Rochlen et al. (2008) also identified three similar types of decision making processes. In their study of 14 fathers, seven discussed how the decision to take on the caregiving role occurred gradually and over time. Four of the fathers identified having a brief but pragmatic discussion, where the decision was relatively unexpected. Finally, the remaining three fathers discussed a relatively spontaneous and instantaneous decision resulting from circumstances. It is significant that in both studies, fewer fathers suddenly and unexpectedly ended up in the caregiver role. These two studies suggest that despite the previous research indicating that pragmatic factors result in fathers taking on the caregiving role, many fathers consider and intentionally decide (and plan) to take on this role, even if this may happen gradually over time.

More recently, Doucet (2016) identified these three similar processes to becoming a primary caregiving father. Firstly Doucet (2016) identified how the choice was described as a mutual and related decision made between heterosexual partners. Secondly, there was this idea of the choice being made for them. In other words, external factors led to it being the only choice. And finally, Doucet (2016) identified how the decision to become a primary caregiving father was described more as a process over time as opposed to a momentary decision.

Significantly, Doucet (2016) argued that how we conceptualise primary caregiving fathers and choice in regards to paid work and caregiving are bound up in cultural structures and ideologies. It then follows that fathers in different countries (i.e. Sweden) who face different structural factors around paid work and carework have different experiences of choice. Overall, Doucet (2016) argued that it is important to focus less on fathers' choices, and focus more on the conditions surrounding what choices are possible.

All of the research discussed in this section so far has explored the reasons why fathers are taking on the caregiving role. However, worth mentioning here is one of the main factors discussed in the literature as to why more fathers are *not* taking on the caregiving role. This factor is described as "maternal gatekeeping". Fathers in heterosexual relationships do not parent in isolation. It has been suggested that women's behaviours and beliefs toward father involvement impacts on how involved fathers are (Allen & Hawkins, 1999). "Maternal gatekeeping" is conceptualised as the beliefs and behaviours that inhibit a collaborative approach and limit men's abilities to learn and engage in childcare and house responsibilities (Allen & Hawkins, 1999).

Accounts of maternal gatekeeping are, however, contested. This is especially true given the fact that research demonstrates that despite evolving understandings and expectations that childcare and house responsibilities should be equally shared, mothers continue to spend more time providing care (Craig, 2006). In particular, mothers engage in more of the physical as opposed to play care with children, and fathers have more discretion over when and what care they provide (Craig, 2006).

In one study, McBride et al. (2005) explored whether mothers' beliefs and attitudes surrounding a father's role influences father involvement. In this study, they utilised self-report and interview data from 30 heterosexual couples. While the findings in this study were not conclusive, they did suggest that mothers play a significant role in father involvement.

They concluded that mothers' beliefs and attitudes do play a gatekeeping role in regards to how involved fathers are in childcare. This particular research highlights that it is not only mothers' behaviours but also their beliefs that influence fathers' investment and involvement in their parenting role (McBride et al., 2005).

While limited research has explored maternal gatekeeping, in particular, in relation to primary caregiving fathers, it is a significant consideration. The research indicates that mothers' beliefs and behaviours influence father involvement. Therefore, it is worth exploring in heterosexual couples where fathers assume the primary caregiving role, if mothers' beliefs and behaviours support high father involvement. Or, if these fathers experience beliefs and behaviours relating to maternal gatekeeping that negatively impact them in this role. At the same time, however, it is important to be mindful of gender stereotypes that often circulate with regard to the concept of maternal gatekeeping, stereotypes that are negative with regard to women, and indeed blame women for men not providing care for their children.

Overall, this section has examined the literature that has focused on exploring the motivations behind why fathers take on the primary caregiving role. Further, it also explored the decision making processes of fathers who assume this role, and maternal gatekeeping as a potential reason why more fathers are not assuming this role.

Attitudes towards primary caregiving fathers

Following exploring the motivations behind why fathers are assuming the primary caregiving role, research has focused on public attitudes towards such fathers. Fathers who take on this role are exposed to many expectations which they deviate from; therefore it is not surprising this leads to varying reactions and attitudes. Brescoll and Uhlmann (2005) identified that people respond negatively to men and women who do not conform to traditional gender roles. They argued that restrictive gender roles and prescriptive gender stereotypes may prevent or

negatively impact on many fathers assuming a primary caregiving role due to the stigma attached to violating the traditional role as financial provider.

Overall, the literature has identified that reactions to and attitudes toward primary caregiving fathers are largely negative, and this is due to the traditional notion of men as "providers" (Brescoll & Uhlmann 2005; Bulbeck, 2005; Burkstrand-Reid, 2012; Callister, 1995; Chesley, 2011; Doucet, 2004; 2006; 2009; 2009a; Doucet & Merla, 2007; Dunn, Rochlen & O'Brien, 2013; Gaunt, 2013; Grbich, 1992; Harrington, Van Deusen & Mazar, 2012; Merla, 2008; Penfold, 1985; Roberts-Holmes, 2009; Rochlen, McKelley & Whittaker, 2010; Sinno & Killen, 2009; Smith, 1998; Solomon, 2014). Despite the dramatic change in attitudes toward women within the workforce, attitudes regarding the role of men within the family have undergone less change (Gaunt, 2013).

Research has identified that many primary caregiving fathers feel they make others uneasy and uncomfortable due to their role, and so they feel they have to be careful and cautious in their behaviours (Doucet, 2006; Grbich, 1992; Smith, 1998). These fathers describe feeling as though they are constantly being scrutinised (Doucet, 2006). Specifically, primary caregiving fathers feel there are certain perceptions about what is appropriate and acceptable physical contact with their children (Doucet, 2009; 2009a). Not only is the appropriateness of fathers as primary carers under question, but also their capability, where fathers feel especially scrutinized when caring for infants (Doucet, 2009; 2009a; Harrington, Van Deusen & Mazar, 2012; Robert-Holmes, 2009; Rochlen, Suizzo, McKelley & Scaringi, 2008; Smith, 1998). In particular, primary caregiving fathers experience negative reactions toward them when they go to places that are traditionally seen as places for mothers. For example, fathers report feeling uncomfortable and out of place when picking their children up from school or day care, as well as when trying to join parenting groups, as the funny looks and reactions they receive make them feel that they do not belong (Merla, 2008; Smith,

1998). It is precisely these attitudes that result in primary caregiving fathers' main frustration that there is no support for them, which can make them feel excluded (Roberts-Holmes, 2009).

In addition to wider public attitudes, primary caregiving fathers experience negative attitudes from their families and friends. Many primary caregiving fathers feel that their friends and family do not understand why they would take on the primary caregiving role, as well as viewing their role as temporary (Harrington, Van Deusen & Mazar, 2012). Fathers commonly report that they feel that others do not take their role seriously, and even if they explain that caregiving is their fulltime role, others will still assume it is only temporary (Grbich, 1992; Smith, 1998). In particular, men report that their own fathers' initial reaction to them taking on the caregiving role is often negative; however, over time acceptance does grow (Grbich, 1992). Primary caregiving fathers also find it difficult to maintain relationships with other men who occupy a more traditional role, where these men find it difficult to relate to primary caregiving fathers (Merla, 2008). Further, many primary caregiving fathers commonly experience negative reactions from primary caregiving mothers (Rochlen, McKelley & Whittaker, 2010). They feel as though they are being "tested" by mothers; that they have to prove they are capable of caregiving before they will be accepted (Smith, 1998).

In one study, Sinno and Killen (2009) explored children's evaluations of primary caregiving fathers. This study interviewed and surveyed 67 second graders and 54 fifth graders in the United States with a variety of family arrangements. They identified that children found it acceptable for mothers to work fulltime, however found it unacceptable for fathers to provide primary care. However this evaluation lessened as children became older. Such a finding is significant, as many fathers would find taking on the primary caregiving role quite distressing if they experienced negative reactions from their own children.

The cultural norm that men should be financial providers largely influences others'

attitudes toward primary caregiving fathers. For example, Dunn, Rochlen & O'Brien (2013) surveyed 54 heterosexual women who assumed the financial provider role and found that these mothers typically did not experience distress in relation to their role, but rather, experienced distress in relation to others judging their partner for assuming the primary caregiver role. Due to rejecting the traditional financial provider role, many primary caregiving fathers report feeling as though they are not considered socially acceptable, and feel others question their masculinity, their own partners included (Burkstrand-Reid, 2012; Dunn, Rochlen & O'Brien, 2013; Merla, 2008).

Haas and Hwang (2008) took advantage of the situation in Sweden where both parents are provided with parental leave. This unique situation allowed for an exploration into attitudes toward fathering, in a context where equal opportunities to take on the primary caregiving role are provided. Through analysing survey data from 356 employed fathers, it was found that despite this, employers still maintained negative attitudes toward men who wanted to take on the caregiving role.

It is precisely these negative attitudes towards primary caregiving fathers that construct and reinforce the idea that such a role for men is "unnatural". Some fathers however, describe feeling unaffected by these negative perceptions of them (Doucet, 2004). Further, Solomon (2014) through in-depth interviews with 32 US primary caregiving fathers, identified how these fathers experience a lot of positive reactions and support from others, feeling "special" and like "exceptional" fathers. Thus, despite recognising that people often expressed confusion and uncertainty over their role, Rochlen, Suizzo, McKelley and Scaringi (2008) identified that primary caregiving fathers largely experience positive reactions from others.

Overall, the majority of reactions and attitudes toward primary caregiving fathers are negative. Whilst it is important for this to change, and society needs to accept and normalise

father involvement, it is also important to be critical of too much praise for these fathers. Nentwich (2008) posed the argument that fathers who assume the primary caregiving role need to reject arguments that are highly supportive and encouraging. Framing these fathers as special and exceptional reinforces the notion that this role is unusual for men. It has been suggested that in order to normalise this role and to disrupt masculine norms of financial provision, these fathers need to take on this caregiving role as though it is unquestioned and "naturally" given (Nentwich, 2008).

Compensatory actions

Given primary caregiving fathers receive so many negative reactions and attitudes toward them taking on this role, much research has sought to explore what compensatory strategies these fathers use to cope. Overall, it has been found that primary caregiving fathers adopt two broad strategies, which include being either dismissive or proactive.

Various dismissive compensatory strategies employed by primary caregiving fathers have been identified. These include relying on the excuse of not "choosing" to be the primary caregiver, withholding information about the extent of their caregiving role, or emphasising how the role is temporary (Smith, 1998). Fathers have also been identified as reducing the effects or dismissing negative reactions by blaming particular individuals for their negative reactions, or rather identifying with and understanding their viewpoint (Smith, 1998).

More proactive compensatory strategies have also been identified. For example, primary caregiving fathers take on self-provisioned unpaid work, or engage in normatively masculine hobbies (e.g. renovating and fixing up the house) in order to legitimate their removal from the paid workforce (Burkstrand-Reid, 2012; Doucet, 2004; Doucet & Merla, 2007; Grbich, 1992; Latshaw, 2011). It has also been identified that primary caregiving fathers engage in housework that is stereotypically masculine (i.e. yard work, maintenance,

driving, etc.) more so than traditionally feminine tasks (Latshaw, 2015). Further, even among primary caregiving fathers who embraced traditionally feminine household tasks, Latshaw (2015) identified how all fathers emphasised their speciality and enjoyment in engaging in traditionally masculine tasks, reinforcing their hegemonic masculinity.

Further, Grbich (1992) found that fathers develop playgroups, allowing them a place for networking and support, as well as involving themselves in media appearances in order to educate, promote and gain acceptance for primary caregiving fathers. Other primary caregiving fathers have been found to shift the focus away from gender differences between mothers and fathers, and rather focus on the common experiences that both mothers and fathers face as primary caregivers (Smith, 1998).

While there are both dismissive and proactive strategies, it is more likely that primary caregiving fathers utilise a combination of both. Merla (2008) interviewed 21 primary caregiving fathers in Belgium, and reported that they draw upon three coping strategies. The first focused on criticising society's values, the second on reducing their transgression by remaining tied to paid work, and the third was a combination of both. Given the increasing number of fathers fulfilling the primary caregiving role, as well as the increased attention they are receiving, both academically and culturally, more updated research should seek to explore whether fathers are engaging in more proactive compensatory strategies to gain more social legitimacy.

Theoretical approach

In any endeavour that aims to explore notions such as masculinity and fathering, it is important to consider them as social constructs. Therefore, this thesis rests upon social constructionism as the broad theoretical approach. The first paper presented in this thesis provides an in depth exploration into the theoretical discussions surrounding masculinity, and

how fathering and masculinity are inextricably intertwined. Therefore, this chapter will not go into detail on this. Instead, the broader theoretical considerations and approaches are explored. This chapter begins by exploring two theoretical considerations that have been discussed in the literature. Following this, an in depth discussion of social constructionism will be provided.

Fathering or mothering?

The empirical literature previously summarised focuses largely on describing primary caregiving fathers. Through this exploration, research has turned toward exploring whether fathering and mothering are inherently distinct and unique experiences, or whether it is possible for men who are primary caregivers to "become" mothers (Doucet, 2006; Doucet & Merla, 2007; Rehel, 2014; Risman, 1987). In other words, when men take on the primary caregiving role, do they develop understandings and enact parenting in similar ways that mothers do?

In response to this question, Rehel (2014) argued that primary caregiving fathers do "become mothers". He argued that this occurs when fathers transition into parenthood in a structurally similar way to mothers, that is, when they have extended time off from work immediately post-birth. When fathers were provided with the opportunity to transition into parenthood freed from the demands of paid work, they took on and understood the responsibilities that were frequently positioned as a core element of mothering (Rehel, 2014). This research is important as it highlights the need for more policies to be implemented in support for paternity leave.

Risman (1987) also argued that men mother. In her study, it was identified that single fathers adopted parenting behaviours that resemble that of women who mother, rather than that of married fathers. Largely, this research supports the idea that the parental role one takes

on better explains parenting behaviours rather than one's gender.

However, Doucet and Merla (2007) identified that fathers themselves expressed how primary caregiving as a father is distinct from primary caregiving as a mother. These fathers argued that they are not trying to, nor could ever, replace the role of a mother. Fathers' experiences of parenting are distinctly different to mothers' experiences of parenting (Craig, 2006). Further, Doucet (2006) published a book dedicated to exploring this issue, and argued that men do not become mothers. Mothering is a gender-laden category that comes with normative expectations which men simply cannot conform to due to their gender. Fathers may enact parenting in a way that takes on the responsibilities that are common to mothering, however, the specific way in which fathering is conducted is different due to men having to negotiate masculinity. Fathers distinguish their role from that of mothers, where they describe what they do as a very different role and identity (Doucet & Merla, 2007). Specifically, fathers emphasise the traditionally masculine aspects of their parenting (Doucet & Merla, 2007). This is not suggesting that fathers cannot parent as fully as women can, nor that they cannot be successful co-parents, rather, that we should not combine these two roles into one, as they are two distinct gendered roles.

Discussions such as this highlight the importance of understanding the theoretical underpinnings of fatherhood research. Further, it outlines the need to understand and research fathering as a social construct.

Terminology

Another consideration that needs to be discussed here, is the language used to describe the population of men under examination in this thesis. Whilst there are a plethora of terms utilised in the previous research to refer to men who are primary caregivers, the most commonly used terms are "stay-at-home fathers/dads" (Chesley, 2011; Doucet, 2004; Doucet & Merla, 2007; Dunn, Rochlen & O'Brien, 2013; Fischer & Anderson, 2012; Grbich,

1992, 1997; Kramer, Kelly & McCulloch, 2013; Merla, 2008; Rochlen, McKelley & Whittaker, 2010; Rochlen, Suizzo, McKelley & Scaringi, 2008; Solomon, 2014; Wall, Aboim & Marinho, 2007; Zimmerman, 2000) and "at-home fathers/dads" (Burkstrand-Reid, 2012; Harrington et al., 2012). Only one study used the problematic term "house husbands" (Penfold, 1985), however this is not overly surprising given how old this research is.

As a whole, the terms utilised in previous research reinforce the normative assumption that fathers are not at home and do not provide primary care (otherwise the distinctions of "at home" or "primary caregiver" would be unwarranted). Further, these fathers are often described as being supported by "breadwinning mothers" (Chesley, 2011) and "working women" (Dunn, Rochlen & O'Brien, 2013), reinforcing the normative assumption that mothers are not breadwinners, and those who do work full-time are an exception, deviating from their normatively expected caregiving role.

One particular study explored the naming practices of fathers who provide primary care and whether it is done in a way that reflects gendered identities (Winter & Pauwels, 2006). In other words, are primary caregiving fathers named in a way that emphasises that they have departed from their traditional role as financial providers, such as using terms that require a gender-specific modification like "male" or "father"? Or are the naming practices more gender-neutral, using terms such as "parent" or "person"? Winter and Pauwels (2006) argue that such an analysis is important as naming practices both reflect and facilitate social change. Therefore it is important to determine if the language used to label these fathers reflects society embracing this role, as well as if it encourages fathers to adopt this role.

Winter and Pauwels (2006) found that the most common terms used included the fathers' parental role, such as "father" or "dad" combined with the location of childcare, such as "house" or "home". While gender-specific terms are still used, adherence to terms that avoid gender bias have become more popular. For example, there was little evidence of sexist

or derogative terms, such as “househusband”, “non-working father” or “unemployed father”. The term “househusband” is complex as it is not simply a gender-specific term, but rather, there is unnecessary reference to marital status, which is irrelevant to the role of child rearing and excludes many fathers. Further, terms such as “non-working” or “unemployed” father/dad are largely problematic as they reveal negative evaluations of these men in relation to their masculinities; they are being linguistically punished for not adhering to the traditional role of men as financial providers.

Bulbeck (2005) also explored the language used when talking of men’s participation in childcare. This study compared the language of young, middle-class Asian and English-speaking Western samples. Across both samples, it was found that discussions of the working mother were common; however, the caregiving father was not. Specifically, the Asian participants emphasised women’s “natural” abilities to rear children, and thus men’s “duty” to support them. The Western participants, however, emphasised more individualist approaches; allowing couples to make decisions about caregiving based on their own situation. Overall, the language used by both samples, when describing support for fathers taking on primary caregiving, implied threats to masculinity and tradition, or that men were unable to do such a role.

Notably, only two researchers (Grbich, 1992, 1997; West et al., 2009) referred to these fathers as “primary caregivers”, and similarly only one as “primary carers” (Roberts-Holmes, 2009) and “primary caretakers” (Wolff et al., 2011). These terms are arguably the best as they simply explain what fathers are doing, rather than emphasising what they are not doing (i.e. absence from the workforce). For this reason, this thesis refers to this population of men as “primary caregiving fathers”.

Social constructionism

Viewing fathering and mothering as gendered practices, and also the exploration of the influence of language, highlights the significance of viewing fathering as a social construct. Therefore, this thesis takes a social constructionist approach to explore fathers and masculinities. This is because fathering is best understood as a socially constructed concept. Fatherhood does not exist outside of social and cultural processes; it in fact exists through these processes (Lupton & Barclay, 1997). Society and culture do not simply shape how people understand fatherhood; rather, they are central to its very production. It is important therefore to explore how fathers as primary caregivers are constructed through various discourses and systems of meaning. Further, the socially constructed ideal of "good" fathers as financial providers is largely informed by Western notions of masculinity. Notions such as masculinity are socially and culturally constructed - there is no stable definition, and its meaning can vary in different times or places (Connell & Messertschmidt, 2005). Further, masculinity is not an attribute of men, nor it is something that exists separate from men. Rather, it is a phenomenon that is performed and constituted by men (Connell & Messertschmidt, 2005). Viewing masculinity in this way allows us to focus on the conditions that bring about different versions of masculinity, as well as emphasising the idea that masculinity is vulnerable to change.

Social constructionism is not an approach per se (Burr, 1995). There is no one simple definition, but rather, social constructionism is best viewed as a perspective that questions the idea that knowledge is objective, and argues that what we know is constructed through various discourses and systems of meaning (Burr, 1995). Gergen (1999) drew some important distinctions between social constructionism and other, similar, positions (i.e. constructivism and social constructivism). Unlike other positions, social constructionism highlights the significance of discourse as playing a central role in the construction of both identities and

the social world (Gergen, 1999).

The importance of taking a social constructionist perspective is in its utility in viewing discourse as constructing the world as opposed to reflecting it (Potter, 1996). Viewing language and descriptions as social practices that accomplish goals, is highly productive from a research perspective, as we can examine how descriptions are constructed as well as constructive (Potter, 1996). In other words, how are particular accounts built up, and how do these accounts build up a specific version of the world?

Constructions and representations

As noted above, this thesis is situated within a social constructionist theoretical framework. Therefore, this section outlines why this thesis focuses on exploring constructions and representations of primary caregiving fathers. Given the view that fathering is socially constructed, it is important for research to explore the sites in which fatherhood is constructed and negotiated. In particular, it is necessary to identify the dominant discourses on fatherhood, and the consequent role they play in the construction of primary caregiving fathers.

Hegemonic masculinity refers to the cultural ideal of masculinity that ascends over other gender formations (Connell, 1987). An in depth discussion on masculinity and hegemonic masculinity can be found in Chapter 2. However, the relevance here of hegemonic masculinity is that there is a distinction between what men are actually like and hegemonic ideals, and these ideals are culturally and historically contingent (Connell, 1987). Hegemonic masculinity can be understood as a context bound common-sense understanding of a socially legitimised masculinity that serves to regulate male behaviour, despite how unrealistic or unachievable it may be. It can be understood as a set of expectations to which men are held accountable.

It becomes clear, then, why it is important to explore the constructions and representations of men and masculinities. While masculine identities are lived out in interaction, negotiations and constructions begin with the cultural representations that provide a repertoire of what it means to be a man and father. Fathers are presented with these notions of what is appropriate, expected, and normal of fatherhood, and so it is crucial to identify what expectations are presented to fathers.

The significance of representation is that it involves the active selection of what to present – it is not simply providing clearly defined information that already exists and has meaning, but rather, deciding what is important and creating what it all means (Eldridge, 1993). This thesis, in particular, utilises parenting texts and newsprint media to analyse the constructions and representations of primary caregiving fathers. The limited research conducted thus far using such sites as data, and upon which the present research draws is detailed below.

Parenting texts

Constructions and representations of primary caregiving fathers are important. However, it is particularly important to identify and explore how parenting practices are measured, monitored, and regulated by utilising "experts" to legitimate particular constructions and expectations. One site where this occurs is within parenting texts. The distribution of such texts serves to normalise particular parenting practices (Lupton & Barclay, 1997). They provide parents sets of category bound norms which they should compare themselves against and then take the appropriate steps to ensure they remain within such normative boundaries.

Numerous parenting texts are published each year instructing parents how to "best" raise their children (Lupton & Barclay, 1997). It is important to critically examine such texts as parents commonly turn to this "expert" knowledge for information on how they should

raise their children, therefore these books have the power to influence fathers (as well as mothers) about what is expected and appropriate of their role (Fleming & Tobin, 2005). Before conducting a close examination of parenting texts, it is significant that mothers are largely the targeted audience for such books, despite being marketed as parenting books, as it is assumed that fathers are not involved in caregiving (Fleming & Tobin, 2005; Lupton & Barclay, 1997; Sunderland, 2000; 2006)

Sunderland (2000) conducted a study on 11 popular parenting texts distributed in the UK in order to determine how fathers are constructed and represented. It was identified that fathers were represented as only playing with their children, and helping their partner, rather than actually providing care. Sunderland (2006) also conducted an analysis of three UK parenting magazines and found very similar results, indicating that fathers were secondary parents and not primary caregivers. Another study that focused on five US parenting magazines identified depictions of fathers that reinforce fathers as financial providers more so than their role as parents and caregivers (Schmitz, 2016).

In another study of 23 randomly selected parenting books, Fleming and Tobin (2005) sought to determine if these books presented an image of fathers as nurturing and highly involved. They found that fathers were not depicted as primary caregivers, and their involvement in caregiving was considered voluntary and of little significance (whereas mothers were necessary). They concluded that parenting books do not adequately describe the importance of the fathering role, and do not make intelligible an involved fathering identity.

Significantly, a discursive study looking at the construction of what a “good” parent is within early childhood literacy (Nichols, Nixon & Rowsell, 2009) was limited to the construction of mothers alone. The authors did note that the data they analysed primarily related to mothers and not fathers; however it is significant that they used the term parent,

when referring to mothers alone. This study in effect dismissed the significance of fathers being omitted from the data they analysed without question. This omission actually has quite important implications about understandings of what constitutes a "good" parent, as the data they analysed clearly implies a "good" parent is synonymous with a "good" mother.

The limited literature that has begun explorations into the constructions and representations within parenting texts demonstrate that these books are largely directed toward mothers. The significance of the analysis in this thesis is that it focuses exclusively on books written for primary caregiving fathers in order to gain insight into how they are constructed and how they are instructed to provide care.

Newsprint media

Newsprint media is another crucial site where parenting practices are constructed and regulated. News media has been a significant focus of academic literature, and much research highlights the utility in analysing this media, due to how it not only reflects but constructs cultural ideologies and priorities. Specifically, Eldridge (1993) explained that no matter how "real" and "natural" the media appears, it is highly constructed. Due to many factors (time, word limits, budgets, resources, etc.) news media must identify, select, reduce, organise, and simplify the story it wishes to present. It is through this process, that the media is actually creating "reality".

In particular, the media influences the construction of individual, as well as, collective subjectivities (Blackman & Walkerdine, 2001). Subjectivity is not fixed, therefore the media is one of the many social, cultural and historical influences on how individuals understand themselves and others. The media disseminates regulatory ideas about what it means to be a person and what "normal" behaviours looks like, and people utilise this information to develop their own identities (Blackman & Walkerdine, 2001).

However, it is important to recognise the distinction between what the media produces and how it is subsequently received by the public. Society and individual identities cannot be completely controlled and their opinions and values are not necessarily vulnerable to change by the messages presented in the media (Eldridge, 1993). This can be, in part, attributed to the media not presenting one clear image of the world, and no one standard set of norms and expectations. Rather, the media frequently provides various, and competing ideas, therefore consumers become critical in their uptake (Eldridge, 1993). It is important then, from the media's perspective, to present images and ideas that closely reflect contemporary culture and society.

Fathers continue to be excluded, comparatively, to mothers within the media, reinforcing long standing notions that fathers are secondary and occasionally, not relevant, to parenting (Schmitz, 2016). Therefore, fathers' limited presence in the media exerts a powerful influence on public understandings of, and responses to, contemporary fathering (Lupton & Barclay, 1997). Whilst parenting and the media is not a new area of research, only a small amount of literature has examined the representation of fathers within the media (e.g., Liong, 2015; Locke, 2016; Stevens, 2015; Wall & Arnold, 2007; Winter & Pauwels, 2006).

Wall and Arnold (2007) examined media representations in order to determine what is constructed and presented as plausible, possible and appropriate for fathers in contemporary society. Through their analysis of a Canadian newspaper, Wall and Arnold (2007) specifically sought to explore whether the media endorses (and thus makes available) the identity of the involved and caregiving father. Their analysis identified how fathers are only presented as secondary parents who are there to support mothers. Their parental responsibilities were depicted as coming after their employment responsibilities and their caregiving and emotional involvement was not expected or considered necessary.

Specific to primary caregiving fathers, Winter and Pauwels (2006) conducted an

analysis on 85 newspaper articles published during 2004 in a variety of countries to explore the media discourses surrounding these fathers. They identified evidence of some discriminatory language as well as how this language limits men in their ability to identify solely as a primary carer, as it is expected that they have a secondary or additional identity/role.

Beyond just the language used to describe these fathers, Liong (2015) analysed the constructions and representations of primary caregiving fathers within Hong Kong newspapers. It was identified that middle-to-upper class fathers were constructed as remaining tied to the public sphere. This construction is significant, as it position these fathers as aspiring to return to paid work, and thus continuing to invest in their financial provider role, demonstrating a socially valued masculinity. The media did not critically evaluate or challenge fathers for this investment, but rather praised them for their sacrifice of giving up their economic power and careers.

Another study examined not only the constructions and representations of primary caregiving fathers in television media, but also how primary caregiving fathers themselves, negotiate with these constructions (Stevens, 2015). The study found that primary caregiving is not framed as a choice for fathers, but rather results from circumstances. Overall, the media highlighted primary caregiving fathers' masculine attributes by framing involved fathering as an addition to paid work (Stevens, 2015). The fathers included in this study struggled to identify with the assumption that fathers do not choose to be primary caregivers. However, whilst these fathers took issue with this construction, all recognised that financial and economic factors were behind their decision to take on the primary caregiving role (Stevens, 2015).

The most recent study by Locke (2016) explored the contemporary context of fathering in the UK by examining news media articles published during 2007-2013. This

study utilised critical discursive psychology and demonstrated how the primary caregiving role was presented as occurring out of necessity for fathers, as opposed to choice. Overall, it was identified that the newspapers drew on hegemonic masculine norms demonstrating how masculinity is inherently bound up in fathering.

A recent quantitative study explored the relationship between stereotypes and the perception of news articles on primary caregiving (Hoewe, Appelman & Stevens, 2017). This study examined 147 participants' perception of a news story on mothers as primary caregivers and fathers as primary caregivers. Overall, it was found that participants who hold traditional stereotypes described the news story on mothers as primary caregivers as more realistic than the news story on fathers as primary caregivers. However, participants found the news story on fathers as primary caregivers as more enjoyable, regardless of their stereotypes. Taken together, the findings of this study are not surprising. The media clearly serves as a crucial site to explore and examine understandings of contemporary fatherhood. In particular, it provides significant insight into what is being constructed as the role and expectations of primary caregiving fathers. Whilst this research has begun, it is still in its infancy, therefore more research is required in order to provide a nuanced account of how these fathers are constructed and what the implications may be of these constructions.

Analytic approach

As discussed in the previous sections, this thesis takes a social constructionist approach and utilises both parenting texts and Australian newsprint media as data. This section explores in detail how discourse analysis is utilised to analyse this data. Further, three specific analytic frameworks were utilised within discourse analysis. These include Critical Psychology, Ideological Dilemmas, and Membership Categorisation Analysis. Although each of these are revisited in each respective paper, I will briefly outline them here.

Discourse analysis

In line with the theoretical epistemology of this thesis, the focus for analysis is not merely on how primary caregiving fathers are described. Rather, the analysis also focuses on the constructive and action-oriented nature of discourse, and on what the text is constructing and accomplishing (Edwards & Potter, 1992; Potter, 1996; Potter & Wetherell, 1987). This approach is typical of a discursive, or discourse analytic, methodology.

There is no single way to define what constitutes a discursive approach or discourse analysis. As a result of being utilised by a variety of disciplines, using a variety of theoretical perspectives, there are many different ways, to understand and approach a discourse analysis (see Edwards, 1997; Edwards & Potter, 1992; Potter & Wetherell, 1987, for extended discussions on approaches to discourse analysis). However, it is still important to provide and understand a broad meaning of what discourse analysis is, as well as how it is used within this thesis.

All discourse analytic approaches share an interest in how language is used to construct differing versions of reality. In other words, the focus is on the function of discourse. Discourse can be defined in many different ways, but is understood in this thesis as concerned with "talk and text as parts of social practices" (Potter, 1996, p.105). Therefore, a discourse analysis generally focuses on the different ways in which texts are organised to determine what is being accomplished, and also analyses the consequences of using some organisations rather than others (Potter & Wetherell, 1987).

However, there are different levels at which discourse can be analysed, and these correspond with different traditions of discursive research. For example, the focus on discourse can be taken from a micro and macro perspective. At the micro level, the focus can be on how people use language to achieve particular ends in conversation. This focus aligns

closely with conversation analysis (Sacks, 1972a; 1972b) which rarely draws beyond the local interactional context to inform the analysis.

This thesis, however, utilises a more macro approach to discourse, which views discourse as shaped by a broader cultural and ideological context. This post-structuralist and Foucauldian approach to discourse views particular ways of talking as constructive of the social world, and as a means of creating meaning and reality (Wetherell, 1998). This approach is not easily summarised, and there is no intention of providing a thorough account here. Only aspects of this post-structuralist approach are utilised in this thesis. For example, this approach is concerned with how power is connected to discourse and the production of particular versions of reality (Foucault, 1980). Power is not understood as something a particular group has, but rather, power is embedded within particular ways of being, and discourse is the site in which these ways of being are constructed and reproduced (Foucault, 1980).

Viewing discourse in this way is analytically useful as it provides a way to analyse fathering and masculinity (Pajumets & Hearn, 2012). This is important as understandings of fatherhood emerge during interactions between men, families and the community, and then translates into behaviours and expectations (Duckworth & Buzzanell, 2009; Matta & Knudson-Martin, 2006). Further, it allows for an analysis of how discourses produce particular versions of reality that regulate and normalise particular social practices such as fathering (Gough & McFadden, 2001).

Overall, this thesis utilises a discourse analysis in a broad sense. In other words, a discourse analysis is utilised as means of analysing how contemporary primary caregiving fathers are constructed and what is accomplished through these constructions. The following sections detail the particular theoretical and analytic focus of each analytic chapter in this thesis.

Critical psychology

The analytic chapters, 3 and 4, utilise Critical Psychology as a guiding framework for the discourse analyses. Stemming from social constructionism, this approach emerged as researchers began to focus heavily on being critical of particular constructions or versions of reality (Burr, 1995). Whilst social constructionism is not required for critical psychology, many of the assumptions of social constructionism do form the foundations of critical psychology (Clarke, 2007).

What makes critical psychology distinct and analytically useful is in its aim to not only understand society, but also in its aim to examine taken-for-granted norms and on challenging the discourses and social practices that maintain dominant social structures (Gough & McFadden, 2001). In other words, critical psychologists seek to challenge restrictive discourses and practices that reinforce traditional social values and norms. In particular, critical psychology encourages a focus on how discourse subordinates particular groups and maintains versions of reality that are more powerful than others (Gough & McFadden, 2001). The consequences of certain social values and norms do not fall equally on all members of a society. Therefore a significant aim of critical psychology is to perform research which not only undermines these constructions, but also seeks and promotes social change.

Utilising a critical psychological approach to studying primary caregiving fathers provides a way to explore the dominant social practices surrounding fatherhood. Further, applying this critical lens enables a way to potentially undermine this social structure and encourage change.

Ideological dilemmas

Chapter 4 was initially guided by a Critical Psychology framework. However, upon analysing the data, it became clear that Michael Billig's notion of ideological dilemmas could significantly inform the analysis (Billig et al., 1988). Billig et al. (1988) described the notion of ideology as the particular values, beliefs or practices of particular societies. Put differently, ideology is understood as the common sense and every day understandings that inform how collective societies make sense of the world. What is significant in Billig et al.'s (1988) definition of ideology is the notion that this common sense thinking is frequently dilemmatic and contradictory.

This inconsistent and contradictory nature of ideology is important, as it demonstrates that ideology is not simply a set of attitudes, but rather, is a method of accounting for or managing particular realities and representations. It is an active way of sense making. Analytically, then, ideological dilemmas are useful as they are a means of exploring competing and conflicting accounts of sense making.

The focus of ideological dilemmas is not on particular individuals and their attitudes or decision making processes. Rather, the concern is on the aspects of socially shared beliefs that give rise to dilemmatic thinking (Billig et al., 1988). Using this lens to view the conflicting ideologies of primary caregiving fathers provides a nuanced way to understand and analyse the everyday sense making of contemporary fatherhood.

Membership categorisation analysis

The analytic chapter, 5, utilises a Membership Categorisation Analysis (MCA) (Sacks, 1972a; 1972b; 1992). MCA is an approach that focuses on people as certain sorts of members of society, and how this information is utilised to make sense of one another and society more generally. The focus of analysis then, is on the discursive ways in which people are

constructed and built up as being a member (or not a member) of a particular category, and what this categorisation accomplishes.

MCA focuses on how categories are embedded with culturally rich common-sense knowledge (Schegloff, 2007). Therefore, if a person is categorised in a particular way, the assumption is that they embody the knowledge and engage in particular activities related to their category. In particular, these activities are understood as category-bound (Sacks, 1992).

MCA is analytically useful to examine how these taken for granted categories are drawn upon in order for people to account for their own experiences and to understand and/or question the experiences of other members of society.

Traditionally, MCA belongs to the Conversation Analysis "family" of discourse analysis. However, it is utilised in this thesis in line with the broader and more post-structuralist approach to analysing discourse. The focus is not on how categorisation is used in specific instances or interactions to accomplish a particular end. Rather, it is utilised in order to understand how primary caregiving fathers are categorised in cultural products such as parenting texts and the newsprint media. In particular, MCA is useful for examining how people are routinely treated as different, defective or exceptions to particular categories (Stokoe, 2006). MCA, then, is utilised in Chapter 5 to examine how primary caregiving fathers are categorised within normative boundaries of masculinity, or treated as an exception.

Aims of this thesis

The aim of the research presented in this thesis is to discursively analyse constructions and representations of primary caregiving fathers. Given the continuing debates surrounding masculinity and fathering (discussed in detail in Chapter 2) and the increasing number of fathers assuming the primary caregiving role, this research is both significant and timely.

The empirical data analysed in this thesis come from two different sources – parenting texts and newsprint media. The analyses of these data focus on the ways in which discourse is utilised to construct and position primary caregiving fathers in contemporary society. The aim is to discern how these fathers are accounted for, and how they are positioned in relation to normative masculinities. The aim is not to define what it means to be a "good" father in contemporary society. Therefore, the analyses presented are not critiques of practices of fatherhood. Rather, the aim in analysing constructions of primary caregiving fathers is to further understand the social norms and expectations made available to these fathers, in the hope to make visible taken-for-granted notions that may limit fathers in this role. Through this, the aim is to also highlight the socially constructed nature of fathering, to demonstrate that fathers need not be positioned as secondary parents, but rather, are equally vital and important in parenting.

Thesis overview

This thesis is formatted as a "thesis by publication" allowed for under the guidelines set down by the University of Adelaide Graduate Centre. This style of thesis was chosen as it allows for a cohesive story to be told: however it also allows for this research to be peer reviewed and disseminated.

This chapter has provided the overall background and context to the issues under consideration in this thesis, the theoretical underpinnings, and analytic framework. Further, the aims and focus of this thesis have been outlined.

In the next chapter, Chapter 2, an in-depth overview of the literature relating to masculinities and primary caregiving fathers is discussed. This chapter is a published theoretical paper in *Social and Personality Psychology Compass*. It explores discussions surrounding whether understandings and practices of masculinity and fatherhood are

evolving. This paper is significant as it outlines where this thesis sits within this theoretical debate.

Chapters 3-5 are analytic papers. Specifically, Chapter 3, a paper published in *Men and Masculinities,* focuses on a discursive analysis of nine popular parenting texts. This paper utilises a critical psychological approach to demonstrate how there are very specific ways in which primary caregiving fathers are instructed to take on this role. This paper is significant as it demonstrates how despite claims of encouraging new and involved models of fatherhood, these books are one site in which accounts of primary caregiving simultaneously reproduce and reinforce norms of hegemonic masculinity.

Chapter 4 utilises data from a different, but equally significant site for constructions and representations of primary caregiving fathers – Australian newsprint media. This paper, published in *Discourse, Context and Media,* focuses on how the media presents contradictory and dilemmatic accounts of primary caregiving fathers. Specifically, the news articles advocate for the evolving ideal of fathers to be involved and nurturing caregivers, however, they also justify continuing inequalities in parenting.

Chapter 5 is the final analytic chapter. This paper, under review in the *Journal of Gender Studies,* also utilises newsprint media to examine constructions and representations of primary caregiving fathers. This paper, however, utilises a membership categorisation analysis to explore how these fathers are categorised and positioned. Overall, the news articles' categorisation of primary caregiving fathers is fluid and flexible, demonstrating how fatherhood continues to be a contested site of competing societal discourses.

Chapter 6 is the concluding chapter of this thesis. In this chapter, the findings of Chapters 2-5 are summarised and what these contribute to existing research are discussed. Further, the implications (for both theory and practice) are explored, as well as some limitations and recommendations for future research. Overall conclusions are drawn for what

this thesis contributes to understandings of primary caregiving fathers.

Statement of authorship

Title of Paper	Hegemonic masculinity versus a caring masculinity: Implications for understanding primary caregiving fathers
Publication Status	☑ Published ☐ Accepted for Publication ☐ Submitted for Publication ☐ Unpublished and Unsubmitted work written in manuscript style
Publication Details	Hunter, S. C., Riggs, D. W. & Augoustinos, M. (2017). Hegemonic masculinity versus a caring masculinity: Implications for understanding primary caregiving fathers. *Soc Personal Psychol Compass, 11*(3). doi: 10.1111/spc3.12307

Principal Author

Name of Principal Author (Candidate)	Sarah Clare Hunter
Contribution to the Paper	Performed analysis on all samples, interpreted data, wrote manuscript and acted as corresponding author.
Overall percentage	85%
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: 29/11/2017

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: 29/11/2017

Chapter 2: Paper 1

Hegemonic masculinity versus a caring masculinity: Implications for understanding primary caregiving fathers

Recently there has been growing interest in what is positioned as a new form of masculinity arising from the increase in fathers as primary caregivers. This new form is referred to as a "caring masculinity", and is theorised as a radical shift away from traditional or hegemonic forms of masculinity. This paper critically examines the fathering literature, focusing specifically on how primary caregiving fathers navigate social norms with regard to masculinity. The paper concludes that there is a complex interplay between expectations of a traditional, provider father and a new and involved father. It is argued that ideas surrounding a caring masculinity are better understood as a broadening of hegemonic masculinity, rather than an entirely new or distinct form.

Recent decades have seen significant change in relation to expectations about both men and women's work and home responsibilities (Rochlen, Suizzo, McKelley & Scaringi, 2008). Specifically, it has been found that women are increasingly involved in the labour market, and men are doing more housework (Latshaw & Hale, 2015).Yet despite these apparent changes, it is nonetheless the case that women in heterosexual relationships continue to remain responsible for the largest proportion of housework, despite their increased involvement in the paid workforce (Latshaw & Hale, 2015). As such, there is potentially as much continuity as there is change with regard to the gendered division of labour in heterosexual households. Nonetheless, and with regard to parenting in heterosexual relationships, there have been changes to norms and expectations of men. Specifically, it has been suggested that understandings of masculinity and fathering in contemporary Western society have been expanded. In response to this apparent expansion, there has been an outpour of literature exploring increased father involvement, with a focus on the implications of this in terms of masculinity. This literature suggests that there has been a shift away from hegemonic forms of masculinity (Connell, 1987), and towards one that has been termed a "caring masculinity" (Elliott, 2015).

This focus on change with regard to fatherhood and masculinity highlights the ways in which such institutions are complex cultural and ideological constructions that are continuously negotiated and reconstructed (Petroski & Edley, 2006). Understandings of fathering are shaped by cultural, political, and economic contexts (Duckworth & Buzzanell, 2009), and what is considered "good" or normative fathering can change over time and place, as well as across individual families, and in response to cultural and institutional change (Duckworth & Buzzanell; Latshaw, 2011; Matta & Knudson-Martin, 2006). As such, it is important that taken-for-granted understandings are critically evaluated. It is particularly important that we focus on the ways in which constructions and understandings of fathering

are intertwined with constructions and understandings of masculinity (Rohner & Veneziano, 2001). Fatherhood cannot be understood separate from masculinity: to study fathers is to study masculinity.

In order to assess recent claims of a shift in masculinity with regard to fathering, this paper examines the literature on primary caregiving fathers so as to consider whether the shift is as marked as has been suggested. For the purpose of this paper, the term primary caregiving fathers refers to fathers who assume the role of primary caregiver. This paper includes research that includes both fathers who have completely removed themselves from paid work, but also fathers who engage in paid work but still assume the primary caregiver role. Therefore, this paper understands primary caregiver fathers as those who self-identify as such, and does not discriminate this definition based on their involvement in paid work. The research that is drawn on in this study uses a variety of terms, (i.e. stay-at-home dads or at-home fathering), however for the purpose of consistency this paper refers to all samples of fathers as primary caregiving fathers. In particular instances, research has also been drawn on that refers to fathering more broadly (and not specifically primary caregiving fathers). In such cases, these papers contribute to providing a context for fathering more generally and also demonstrate arguments that are applicable but have yet to be applied specifically to primary caregiving fathers.

Overall, this paper will demonstrate that it may well be too simplistic to suggest that hegemonic masculinity is no longer guiding understandings of fatherhood, and that the introduction of a caring masculinity and a new and involved father is perhaps not as dominant as has been suggested, specifically with regard to fathers who are primary caregivers. The paper will conclude by arguing that there is a complex interplay between ideologies of the traditional provider father and a new and involved father, and this complexity needs to be acknowledged and utilised within research on men and fathering.

Hegemonic masculinity

Paid work – and the notion of men as "breadwinners" – is traditionally understood as a fundamental foundation of a fathering identity, serving to legitimate a socially valued form of masculinity (Hanlon, 2012; Medved, 2016; Petroski & Edley, 2006; Whelan & Lally, 2002). Given the longstanding norm of father-as-provider, this subject position can be viewed as hegemonic. Hegemonic masculinity, Connell (1987) suggests, is located at the apex of a hierarchy of masculinities. While there is ambiguity and debate surrounding what hegemonic masculinity actually is (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Donaldson, 1993; Edley & Wetherell, 1995; Speer, 2001; Wetherell & Edley, 1999), as a theoretical concept it brings attention to the fact that not all masculinities are considered equal.

In terms of defining the concept, hegemonic masculinity is understood as the most honoured or desired form of masculinity, and it drives understandings and expectations of what it means to be a man (Connell, 2003). Most simply, it is an interpretation and understanding of what masculinity should be, and thus dominates over and subordinates all other styles of not only masculine expression, but also expressions of womanhood (Connell, 1987). The hegemonic male ideal traditionally embodies qualities such as being strong, successful, capable, unemotional, and in control (Connell, 2003). Even if men do not live up to the cultural ideal of hegemonic masculinity, it has been suggested that they still acknowledge its existence and are complicit in sustaining it, as they are able to enjoy the advantages from the general subordination of women and men positioned outside of the ideal (Connell, 2000). As such, while very few men achieve the hegemonic masculine ideal, all men are measured against it (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). As such, men exist in a continuous state of tension with hegemonic masculinity, demanding them to continuously negotiate with it (Plantin, Mansson & Kearney, 2003).

Hegemonic masculinity informs all aspects of men's lives, but is particularly relevant

in regards to fathering as it informs understandings of what fathers are expected to be and what a good father should be. Hegemonic forms of masculinity have traditionally informed understandings of fathers as overly authoritarian, disinterested, absent, and emotionally distant (Ammari & Schoenebeck, 2015; Finn & Henwood, 2009; Johansson, 2011). Significantly, hegemonic masculinity has also informed the expectation that fathers should be the primary financial provider; they are expected to construct their identities as fathers through paid work (Haas & Hwang, 2008). This can grant fathers a powerful position within a heterosexual, nuclear family, as it underpins traditional understandings of fathers as associated with power, authority, and status (Brandth & Kvande, 1998).

It is important to note that whilst individual men approximate this "traditional" father in varying ways, not all men conform to these attributes. However, there is a general consensus that a "good" father provides for their family financially, and this "good provider" model remains the strongest core definition of fatherhood (Ammari & Schoenebeck, 2015; Dowd, 2000; Gatrell, Burnett, Cooper, & Sparrow, 2015; Lamb, 2000; Medved, 2016; Miller, 2011; Whelan & Lally, 2002). Whilst mothers can and do assume decision making roles, especially in regards to child rearing, being the primary financial provider means that fathers are typically positioned as the "head of the household", which potentially allocates them more power as the primary decision-maker (Catlett & McKenry, 2004).

It is important to recognise, however, that financial provision can be understood as a form of caregiving as it is commonly viewed as a fatherly or masculine way of showing and providing care (Hanlon, 2012). Therefore, it is not necessarily correct to suggest that this traditional model of fathering does not value caregiving or involvement in child rearing, but rather that it prioritizes paid work over other ways of providing for children (Gatrell et al., 2015).

Caring masculinity and the new and involved father

Despite the utility of the concept of hegemonic masculinity to the study of fathering, primary caregiving fathers do not fit easily into this subject position. This is not to suggest that primary caregiving fathers are entirely outside hegemonic positions, but rather to suggest that given the norm of financial provider inherent to hegemonic masculinity and fathering, it is possible that the concept of hegemonic masculinity does not entirely capture the experiences of primary caregiving fathers, or that the concept requires some reworking in order to speak to the experiences of such fathers.

One term that has sought to address the subject positions of fathers who may not be viewed as complying with hegemonic ideals is that of "caring masculinity". The concept of a caring masculinity proposes that men are able to adopt what is viewed as traditionally feminine characteristics (i.e. emotional expression, sensitivity, domestication, interdependence, caring, etc.) without departing from or rejecting masculinity (Elliott, 2015; Miller, 2011). Men who approximate this form of masculinity are viewed as a form of "new man" (Edley & Wetherell, 1999; Smith, 2016; Singleton & Maher, 2004). Furthermore, fathers not only have the opportunity to explore a more nurturing side, but they are also now *expected* to be more involved in caregiving. There is a general consensus that there has been a shift in expectations in this regard (Habib, 2012; Lamb, 2000; Latshaw & Hale, 2015; Lupton & Barclay, 1997; Merla, 2008, Wall & Arnold, 2007).

To date there has been considerable enthusiasm surrounding the emergence of this new father in the masculinities literature, as the benefits of a father who is attentive, expressive and involved have been found to outweigh those of a caring father who is detached and distant (Elliott, 2015; Henwood & Procter, 2003; Stevens, 2015). This enthusiasm is tempered, however, by critical accounts which have challenged the temptation to overly simplify these ideas into a "new" versus "traditional" father (Dermott, 2008). The

recognition of a "good" father as one who is involved and nurturing does not mean that the "provider" father is no longer seen as "good", or no longer occupies a hegemonic position. Further, there has been considerable debate surrounding whether fathers are actually living up to these new expectations (Craig, 2006; Cosson & Graham, 2012; Doucet, 2004, 2009; Henwood & Procter, 2003; LaRossa, Gordon, Wilson, Bairan & Jaret, 1980; Lupton & Barclay, 1997). As we shall now see with regard to primary caregiving fathers, caring and hegemonic masculinities often appear to sit alongside one another, rather than the former superseding the latter.

Primary caregiving fathers negotiating masculinities

It would seem from the research summarized above that both a caring and hegemonic masculinity are equally prominent within both academic and public discourse. Fathers are therefore required to negotiate with norms and expectations of a traditional, provider model of fathering as well as a new and involved model of fathering. For primary caregiving fathers, negotiating the two sets of expectations may be particularly challenging. What is needed, then, is consideration of how primary caregiving fathers negotiate and construct an intelligible masculine identity that takes into account both sets of expectations.

The increase in fathers taking on a primary caregiving role in itself suggests that some fathers are stepping away from the traditional provider role, instead adopting the "new and involved" model of fathering. Early Australian research has shown that in order for fathers to take on primary caregiving, they are required to reject and redefine understandings (both their own and those around them) of men as providers, and actively introduce the idea of men as caregivers (Grbich, 1992; 1995; 1997). More recent research in Belgium, Australia, Sweden, the UK and the USA has supported this, suggesting that primary caregiving fathers abandon traditional norms and pressure in order to undertake the role (Merla, 2008; Shirani, Henwood

& Coltart, 2012). Cumulatively, then, this research would appear to suggest that the uptake of primary caregiving contributes to evolving norms and expectations amongst fathers. Further, expressing interest in and identifying as a new and involved father allows primary caregiving fathers to distance themselves from the many characteristics of hegemonic masculinity that are viewed negatively (Finn & Henwood, 2009).

Yet despite research which has indicated both the explicit favouring of an involved father identity, combined with negative attitudes toward the more traditional father, research conducted in the UK has found that fathers nonetheless continue to speak of how it takes a "bigger" and "stronger" father to be involved in caregiving (Henwood & Procter, 2003). This reflects the findings of Wetherell and Edley (1999), where the most effective way of approximating a hegemonic position in regards to masculinity can be to demonstrate one's distance from it. Further, while fathers in Henwood and Procter's research did not treat breadwinning as a core component of being a good father, it was still always treated as a salient concern by their participants.

Middle-to-upper class primary caregiving fathers in America have similarly acknowledged that traditional norms still exist. However in research by Rochlen and colleagues (2008), such men reported not feeling as though their masculinity was threatened by their caregiving role, by positioning their masculinity as flexible enough to incorporate caregiving. At the same time, these fathers spoke of having interests and hobbies that were linked to traditional notions of masculinity, such as sport and being "handy men". It would appear, then, that these fathers reject the traditional norms of masculinity that do not serve their identity, and hold onto the ones that do. As such, they are engaged in simultaneous rejection and uptake of hegemonic masculinity, rather than simply a wholesale uptake of a caring masculinity (framed as entirely different to hegemonic accounts of masculinity and fathering). Rochlen et al.'s (2008) research thus succinctly demonstrates how primary

caregiving fathers negotiate a balance of both caring and traditional masculinities.

Research has also demonstrated that class plays an important role in how men view their primary caregiving role. For example, working-class fathers in Hong Kong have been reported as more likely to take on the role more permanently, and to view their identity as a caregiver, compared to middle-to-upper class fathers (Liong, 2015). This can be explained through recourse to the idea that middle-to-upper class fathers are awarded significant power and status due to their socially valued paid work. Therefore, taking on a primary caregiving role results in giving up this power and status. Thus, middle-to-upper class primary caregiving fathers may frame their primary caregiving role as temporary, and attempt to remain tied to their paid work.

However, research in Canada, Belgium, and Norway has also identified how middle-to-upper class fathers who feel they have reached professional success and have achieved their career goals expressed no concern with permanently leaving paid work (Brandth & Kvande, 1998; Doucet, 2004; Doucet & Merla, 2007; Ranson, 2001). This is significant, as it would appear these fathers see it as only appropriate to take on a caregiving role when they have "successfully" completed their prescribed role as a financial provider. These fathers, therefore, may feel they can afford to take risks with their masculinity due to their capital and status from being middle-to-upper class men.

Given the varied relationships that primary caregiving fathers are likely to have to hegemonic expectations about fathering and masculinity, it is not surprising that the research summarized above consistently shows that primary caregiving fathers remain connected to hegemonic masculine norms and sources of identity (Burkstrand-Reid, 2012; Doucet, 2004; 2006; Merla, 2008; Nentwich, 2008; Pajumets & Hearn, 2012; Shirani, Henwood & Coltart, 2012; Smith, 1998). Such a connection may well be important, it has been suggested, so as to mitigate any sense of "failure" in the context of norms of hegemonic masculinity with regard

to fathering (Doucet & Merla, 2007). Whilst, as noted above (and also in the work of Solomon, 2014), there is likely to be a particular classed aspect to whether or not primary caregiving is seen as "success" or "failure" by fathers, it would nonetheless appear to be the case that even though primary caregiving fathers actively step away from the role of financial provider, they find it difficult to remove themselves completely from it (Burkstrand-Reid, 2012; Doucet, 2004; Doucet & Merla, 2007; Grbich, 1992; Latshaw, 2011; Merla, 2008; Nentwich; 2008; Pajumets & Hearn, 2012; Shirani, Henwood & Coltart, 2012; Wall & Arnold, 2007). Indeed, while discourses of the new and involved father are emerging, this does not necessarily mean a move entirely away from expectations of being a financial provider, but rather, there are increasing expectations for fathers to be more than just a financial provider (Yarwood, 2011). Therefore, primary caregiving fathers, whilst meeting new expectations of fathering, still negotiate with traditional provider expectations of fathering.

In this regard, research indicates that primary caregiving fathers commonly remain tied to paid work, replace paid work with unpaid work, or become involved in community work, so they can remain connected to their "provider" identity, thus asserting to others and reassuring themselves that they are still men (Burkstrand-Reid, 2012; Doucet, 2004; Doucet & Merla, 2007; Grbich, 1992; Latshaw, 2011; Medved, 2016). Research that has explored representations of primary caregiving fathers within Hong Kong newspapers, for example, has found that they are portrayed as remaining connected to the public sphere (Liong, 2015). If primary caregiving fathers are unable to maintain links to work (either paid or unpaid), research suggests that they engage in training and education in order to ensure and prepare for their return to work (Brandth & Kvande 1998; Grbich, 1992; Latshaw, 2011).

The above points help to explain Doucet's (2004) claim that such fathers do not fulfil a position strictly equivalent to that of women who are primary caregivers. For example,

amongst heterosexual couples living in America, mothers tend to "take over" from primary caregiving fathers during the evenings and on weekends (Latshaw & Hale, 2015; Smith, 1998). Therefore, these fathers are able to reassert their masculinity through taking time off from the caregiving role, demonstrating that it is not the sole aspect of their identity (Latshaw & Hale, 2015). Research also suggests that traditionally, when fathers take on primary caregiving, they were not required to take on other aspects of the role, such as housework, as it was often not considered within the role of caregiving for fathers (Brandth & Kvande, 1998). It could be argued that this also works to distance fathers from femininity and is a way to reinforce mothers' secondary status and fathers' dominance (Brandth & Kvande, 1998). What these studies suggest, then, is that families that have a primary caregiving father may not be breaking away from traditional norms, and rather, may be enacting understandings of masculinity and femininity in a similar way to more traditional understandings.

The increasing evidence that primary caregiving fathers actively negotiate with normative expectations demonstrates the complexity of the issue, and suggests that these fathers are both transgressive and complicit with hegemonic definitions of masculinity (Merla, 2008; Medved, 2016; Shirani, Henwood & Coltart, 2012). Moreover, it is significant that it is hegemonic masculinity that appears to guide definitions of contemporary fathering. Transgressing and abandoning hegemonic masculinity still requires acknowledgement and negotiation with it. Even though a caring masculinity has been theorised to have emerged, gendered expectations appear to remain the same - men must still be men, and it is important that they continue to prove their masculinity (Burkstrand-Reid, 2012). Overall, the research reviewed above suggests that we cannot simply conclude that hegemonic masculinity no longer guides understandings of what it means to be a man, and a father.

Conclusion

This paper has provided a brief overview of international research on masculinities and primary caregiving fathers. It has suggested that hegemonic masculinity as a concept is theoretically complex, and that it is contentious within the literature. However, the research on primary caregiving fathers demonstrates that we cannot conclude that it is of diminishing importance in men's lives. Even though it is difficult to define and locate hegemonic masculinity, it is clear that primary caregiving fathers negotiate with and position themselves in relation to it as a taken for granted set of norms. In addition, the introduction of a caring masculinity and ideologies of a new and involved father also cannot be ignored. Primary caregiving fathers demonstrate that the norms and expectations of fathers are evolving, and that they are no longer required to adhere strictly to traditional, provider expectations of fathering, even if they are still expected to enact particular hegemonic forms of masculinity.

The literature, however, remains unclear with regard to how the increased focus on a caring masculinity fits in with understandings of hegemonic masculinity (Doucet, 2004). An issue first raised by LaRossa et al. (1980), is that discourses of fatherhood suggest that fathers are more involved and more nurturing than what they are in practice. This is a debate that continues in the literature, raising the question of whether or not a new and involved father actually exists, or whether this is just a variation on what has come before (Edley & Wetherell, 1999; Dermott, 2008; Drakich, 1989; Shirani, Henwood & Coltart, 2012; Wall & Arnold, 2007). Further, the enthusiasm for this new and involved father and its influence on the development of the concept of a caring masculinity may have resulted in research that is uncritical (Brandth & Kvande, 1998). The focus to date has been on the introduction of this *new* masculinity, and this *new* father, yet we need to be cautious not to assume that father love and involvement is new. Rather, the focus should be on how the expression and behaviours of care and love may be evolving or changing, as much as on how it may remain

the same albeit in different guises. The uncritical uptake of notions of the new father may result in unrealistic expectations for fathers (Everingham & Bowers, 2006). We cannot redefine fatherhood based on ideals; there are structural and economic factors that work against the new father image (Dowd, 2000).

Similarly, it is important that as researchers we acknowledge that this new and involved father is very much associated primarily with white, middle-to-upper class fathers (Finn & Henwood, 2009). Such fathers who take on a primary caregiving role already possess the economic, social and cultural resources to be able to take risks with their masculine identities (Farrell, 2015; Marks & Palkovitz, 2004). This would suggest that masculinity is not evolving or changing *per se*, but rather that those who meet current norms and expectations of hegemonic masculinity are afforded the luxury to be involved in caregiving. As such, critical accounts of a caring masculinity and the new and involved father suggest that this new father is essentially hegemonic (Henwood & Procter, 2003). This new father is able to adhere to the new expectations and norms without surrendering the benefits of hegemonic privilege (Smith, 2016). This new father is able to enjoy the benefits of parenting while avoiding the competing demands of childcare and household work (Cosson & Graham, 2012). Fathers want to be more involved with their children, however not necessarily in a gender equal way (Johansson, 2011).

In conclusion, it is important to recognise that there is a complex interplay between expectations of a traditional, provider father and a new and involved father. It is too early to suggest that there is a wholesale departure from hegemonic masculinity. Rather, the ideas surrounding a caring masculinity are better understood as a broadening of hegemonic masculinity to include roles more traditionally undertaken by women. This has important implications for how we theorize and understand primary caregiving fathers. Specifically, and has been noted already in this paper, it is vitally important that as researchers we focus

closely on which fathers and when: who has the cultural capital to rework norms of masculinity and fatherhood, and what specific contexts render this intelligible. Further, it is important that any theorisations of fathering pay close attention to how mothering is concurrently understood. As the concept of hegemonic masculinity would suggest, masculine hegemonies are primarily founded on the disavowed feminine other. Thinking through purported shifts in masculinity and fathering thus requires us to focus concurrently on what such shifts mean in the context of gendered divisions in carework, so as not to lose sight of whether or not changes in masculinity are merely cosmetic, or whether they actually contribute to shifting gender norms.

Statement of authorship

Title of Paper	Constructions of primary caregiving fathers in popular parenting texts
Publication Status	☑ Published ☐ Accepted for Publication ☐ Submitted for Publication ☐ Unpublished and Unsubmitted work written in manuscript style
Publication Details	Hunter, S. C., Riggs, D. W. & Augoustinos, M. (2017). Constructions of primary caregiving fathers in popular parenting texts. *Men and Masculinities*, 1-20. doi: 10.1177/1097184X17730593

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Overall percentage	85%
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: 29/11/2017

Co-Author Contributions

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

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

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

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

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Chapter 3: Paper 2

Constructions of primary caregiving fathers in popular parenting texts

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 paper 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 emphasise 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.

Introduction

The 21st century has seen considerable change in fathering identities and practices (Dempsey & Hewitt, 2012). Changing social and economic conditions have contributed to evolving expectations and norms within families, where men are now expected to be more involved in childcare and house responsibilities (Wall & Arnold, 2007). This increasing expectation of involved fathering has seen the emergence of an emotionally expressive and nurturing image of ideal fathers within the media (Miller, 2011), and an increase in the number of fathers who assume a primary caregiving role (Chesley, 2011). However, caregiving is still predominantly considered "women's work", and thus not a responsibility of fathers (Maurer & Pleck, 2006). Therefore, both cultural and academic attention has shifted toward a focus on fathers who assume the primary caregiving role, as they challenge this societal view and normative understandings of masculinity.

A focus on masculinity in the context of primary caregiving fathers is particularly important as constructions and understandings of fathering are intertwined with constructions and understandings of masculinity (Rohner & Veneziano, 2001). Hegemonic masculinity – defined as the most honoured or desired form of masculinity - has long informed normative understandings of fathers as financial providers (Connell, 2003). However, due to primary caregiving fathers typically stepping away from the financial provider role, the concept of hegemonic masculinity does not entirely capture the experiences of these fathers. A recent paper described how the academic literature has shown a growing interest in a new form of "caring masculinity" to describe the primary caregiving fathers (Hunter, Riggs & Augoustinos, 2017). However, it went on to identify that ideas surrounding this form of caring masculinity are better understood as a broadening of hegemonic masculinity (Hunter, Riggs & Augoustinos, 2017). As such, primary caregiving fathers face complex and contradictory expectations, and have been identified as simultaneously transgressive and

complicit with hegemonic definitions of masculinity (Medved, 2016). It becomes important then, to direct research toward a focus on masculinity, in order to unpack these complex constructions and negotiations.

To date, research on primary caregiving fathers has primarily focused on examining the reasons why men take on the primary caregiving role, the difficulties they encounter and their associated coping strategies, and how fathers negotiate their fathering and masculine identity (e.g., Burkstrand-Reid, 2012; Chesley, 2011; Doucet & Merla, 2007; Dunn, Rochlen & O'Brien, 2013; Fischer & Anderson, 2012; Latshaw, 2011; Latshaw & Hale, 2015; Rochlen, McKelley, Suizzo & Scaringi, 2008; Rochlen, Suizzo, McKelley & Scaringi, 2008). However, in order to understand contemporary fathering, it is important for research to also focus on popular culture, and the significant role it plays in the production of discourses which in turn can create pressures and expectations that men must navigate (Lupton & Barclay, 1997). Research needs to examine the sites in which discourses on fathering are constructed and reproduced, and to consider the implications of such discourses. One contemporary site in which constructions and representations of primary caregiving fathers are located is in parenting texts, and the study reported in this paper focuses on examining these texts for their constructive and action-oriented nature (Potter, 1996).

Previous research on men in parenting texts

Parenting texts, in the context of this paper, are understood as books that are published and marketed as a manual, instruction guide, or source of knowledge for parent readers. Such books are increasingly written for primary caregiving fathers in order to assist them to effectively raise children, focusing on instructing fathers on how "to be" a primary caregiving father. Therefore, these books present themselves as a crucial source of information on fatherhood, and thus potentially exert influence on understandings of fathering. It is important

to critically examine these books as they market themselves as a source of authority in addressing questions relating to effective parenting, frequently drawing upon experts in the fields of science, medicine, and the social sciences to substantiate their claims (Lupton & Barclay, 1997). As such, it is productive to be critical of what messages this literature is presenting. It is important to identify what intelligible identities they make available for fathers, and how they instruct them to parent.

There has been limited research on parenting texts directed at fathers. Fathers are rarely the focus of parenting texts, as mothers have historically and in the present been positioned as having primary responsibility for caregiving (Fleming & Tobin, 2005; Lupton & Barclay, 1997; Sunderland, 2000; 2006). Analyses of parenting texts in general demonstrate that fathers are more often than not positioned as part-time parents or helpers with less competence than mothers, who have few caregiving responsibilities and are predominantly positioned as financial providers (Fleming & Tobin, 2005; Sunderland 2000; 2006; Vuori, 2009; Wall & Arnold, 2007). As such, it is not surprising that research on primary caregiving fathers suggests that such fathers struggle to negotiate their role due to perceptions of them as the secondary parent, along with expectations that they should be financial providers (Burkstrand-Reid, 2012; Chesley, 2011; Doucet & Merla, 2007; Dunn, Rochlen & O'Brien, 2013; Fischer & Anderson, 2012; Latshaw 2011; Latshaw & Hale, 2015; Rochlen, McKelley, Suizzo & Scaringi, 2008; Rochlen, Suizzo, McKelley & Scaringi, 2008).

In a study on popular parenting books, Fleming and Tobin (2005) sought to determine if the identity of the "new" father is made intelligible to fathers. They identified that fathers were not depicted as primary caregivers, and their involvement in caregiving was considered voluntary and of little significance (whereas mothers' caregiving was depicted as necessary). They concluded that parenting books do not adequately describe the importance of the fathering role, and do not make available the new and involved fathering identity. In a similar

way, Vuori's (2009) study examined texts specifically focused on fathers who provide care. Vuori found that men were welcomed to fatherhood, they were encouraged to enjoy it, learn new things, and to liberate themselves from traditional expectations. In particular, fathers were encouraged to get involved through a construction of fatherhood as fun – they were constructed as more lively and playful compared to mothers. It is significant that mothers in these texts were still constructed as the decision makers, and were encouraged to make room for fathers, to let them get involved (Vuori, 2009). Sunderland (2000) identified a similar construction through a discourse analysis of popular parenting texts. Sunderland (2000) outlined how fathers were encouraged to get involved as it is not only important, but playing with children was framed as "fun". Sunderland (2006) also conducted an analysis of parenting magazines and identified very similar results. Even though these magazines were directed to parents and not just mothers, they continued to typically address mothers, reinforcing the idea that fathers are secondary parents and not primary caregivers.

Whilst the studies reported above have much to tell us about how fathers are depicted in general parenting texts, they have less to tell us about how fathers are depicted in texts written solely for fathers, and even less to tell us about how primary caregiving fathers are depicted aimed at this cohort. The research reported below thus sought to add to the literature summarised above by focusing specifically on parenting texts aimed at primary caregiving fathers.

Method

Analytic approach

This paper examines how primary caregiving fathers and masculinity are constructed in popular parenting texts. This was achieved by utilising a discourse analysis informed by a critical psychological perspective (Gough & McFadden, 2001). Critical psychology is

influenced by social constructionism which explains how the social world is constructed through language and discourse (Burr, 1995). This perspective is significant as it recognises how certain accounts of reality are more powerful than others (Gough & McFadden, 2001). Therefore critical psychology is analytically useful for the insights it affords us about how particular social practices, such as fathering, are constructed (Gough & McFadden, 2001). Further, this approach seeks to examine how truth claims are made, in whose service they operate, and firmly believes that research should challenge oppression and promote social change (Gough & McFadden, 2001).

Sample

The data analysed in this study come from nine books written by and for primary caregiving fathers. Books were selected if they were published between the years 2000-2014. The analysis was particularly concerned with contemporary constructions of primary caregiving fathers, given the changing norms and expectations of fathers. Therefore, books published prior to 2000 were not included for analysis as research indicates that the 21st century has seen considerable change in fathering identities and practices (Dempsey & Hewitt, 2012). The nine texts selected reflect the most recent and popular texts published, as identified via rankings and searches of Amazon.com. "Amazon" was used due to its large selection of books and its features to sort results via "bestselling", "publication date", "featured" and "average customer review", making it easier to identify the most popular books. The following search terms were used: "stay at home dads", "stay at home fathers" and "fathering". 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 include books published in Australia, UK, and USA. Whilst this sample includes texts from a variety of countries, they all originate from the same Western

cultural context with shared social norms and values. Further, the sample includes two types of books. The first type includes four books that are parenting manuals, written as instruction guides for fathers. These can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1: *Parenting Manual Books*

Title	Author	Year
The Stay at Home Dad Handbook	Baylies & Toonkel	2004
Stay-at-Home Dads: The Essential Guide to Creating the New Family	Gill	2001
The Stay @ Home Dad: 200+ Tips and Hints to Running Your Household	Cookson	2013
Full Time Father: How to Succeed as a Stay at Home Dad	Hallows	2004

The second type includes five books that are instructive although written through an autobiographical narrative. These can be seen in Table 2.

Table 2: *Autobiographical Books*

Title	Author	Year
Daddy, Where's Your Vagina? What I Learned as a Stay-at-Home Dad	Schatz	2009
Captain Dad: The Manly Art of Stay-at-Home Parenting	Byrnes	2013
Dad or Alive: Confessions of an Unexpected Stay-at-Home Dad	Kulp	2013
Hear me Roar: The Story of a Stay-at-Home Dad	Robertson	2012
Cinderfella: My Life as a Stay-at-Home Dad	Mastin	2010

Coding procedure

As this paper utilised a discourse analysis informed by critical psychology, analysis of the data consisted of several stages. Initially, each book was ready from cover to cover, in order to gain familiarity with the text as well as allowing for all sections of the books to be analysed. After this, a second in-depth reading was accompanied by selecting quotes from the books that related to masculinity, heteronormativity, and sexuality, and for each quote, theoretical notes were made to describe its significance. Once all books were re-read, quotes taken, and noted, the quotes were examined for any patterns, and were coded accordingly. These patterns were, to a large degree, obvious and dictated by the foci of the books. It is important to note that these patterns did not pre-exist the analysis, and were identified throughout the analytic process. Once the patterns were identified, each quote was analysed both individually and collectively in regards to their constructive and rhetorical work. The analysis that follows then, is organised around the identified patterns, and the extracts are examples of how these patterns were constructed in the books.

Analysis

The extracts and quotes analysed include a small but representative sample of the discursive constructions of masculinities and the primary caregiving father identity within the books. The focus of the analysis is not merely on how masculinities and fathers are represented within the books. Rather, the analysis takes as a starting point the constructive and action-oriented nature of language, and focuses on what the text is doing, accomplishing and constructing (Edwards & Potter, 1992; Potter, 1996; Potter & Wetherell, 1987).

The books analysed are required to engage in a negotiation process. To write a book that represents the lives of primary caregiving fathers, the authors must negotiate with what norms and ideas are available to them and construct their own ideas of what constitutes a

primary caregiving father. The books then do not present a neutral, factual description of primary caregiving fathers. Instead, they present a constructed *version*, the author's own version, of primary caregiving fathers.

The focus of the following analysis is to explore the ways in which versions and accounts worked to construct a normative account of primary caregiving fathers. Taken at face value, these books are concerned with promoting and normalising primary caregiving fathers, as they are marketed as encouraging and helping these fathers. However, the analysis that follows makes evident that the process of constructing primary caregiving fathers as normative and legitimate is a dilemmatic process, one that requires considerable discursive and rhetorical work.

In the sections that follow, four identified interpretative repertoires are analysed. Potter and Wetherell (1987) describe interpretative repertoires as the various ways in which individuals describe the world. They are relatively established and coherent ways of talking about things; they can be understood as the building blocks people draw on within everyday interaction (Potter & Wetherell, 1987). By considering these four interpretative repertoires, we can see the ways in which the parenting texts navigate a complex negotiation process.

Fathers as financial providers

The books analysed were written and marketed as books that want to educate and help fathers who have taken on the primary caregiving role. The assumption, then, is that these books seek to support and encourage such fathers. Readers, like the authors, are likely aware that primary caregiving is a departure from a currently accepted social norm (of men as financial providers, not primary caregivers). Therefore, accounts that do not acknowledge and negotiate with this norm and its influence on primary caregiving fathers are at risk of being discounted, or as potentially presenting an uninformed, biased, or unrealistic portrayal of

primary caregiving fathers.

To avoid this, and to ensure that their accounts are seen as legitimate and factual, the books offer up the opposing side of the argument. This not only makes for a more convincing argument in favour of primary caregiving, but the books appear more knowledgeable as well as more empathic toward readers. The opposing side they offer up nonetheless rests upon a discussion of masculinity and financial providing. Therefore, throughout all of the books the authors draw upon a repertoire of men as financial providers. This repertoire is framed as an "honest" account of what it means to be a primary caregiving father, and includes acknowledging the difficulties associated with relinquishing paid employment, as can be seen in the following quotes.

> It is surprising how overnight you can change from being a worthwhile and productive member of society, to being an unpaid servant whose only function is to respond to the whims of a small child (Hallows, 2004, p. 21)

> The most difficult adjustment of full-time parenting was the loss of 'status' (Baylies and Toonkel, 2004, p. 39)

Both of these extracts suggest that the authors understand the difficulties associated with the loss of paid employment. For example, Hallows (2004) draws upon a normative expectation that fathers should view taking on the caregiving role as a demotion, positioning men as "worthwhile" and "productive" when they are financial providers, but then as "servants" when they are caregivers. This highlights how in contemporary society, paid work continues to be socially valued over unpaid work. Similarly, the extract from Baylies and Toonkel (2004) suggests that it is not simply the adjustment of giving up one's paid employment, but

the associated loss of status and privilege that comes with having socially valued paid employment. Due to giving up a socially valued role in society the authors then proceed to detail at length the subsequent struggles that comes with this loss of status.

> I have heard (at some length) about how a stay at home Dad couldn't feel as if he was a man anymore because he was no longer the breadwinner, and that clearly he would be immediately unattractive to his partner (Hallows, 2004, p. 143)

> Look, I've lost my job. The e-mails have stopped, my phone doesn't ring anymore, and I'm slipping into irrelevancy. My pride is shattered and self-worth is barely existent. I've boxed up my manhood, destined for storage, and I'm going to be spending eleven hours a day with a two-month-old girl who can't talk to me (Kulp, 2013, p. 97)

Here, we can see how Hallows (2004) constructs the notion that caregiving may strip men of their gendered identity, suggesting that when they step away from their provider role, they also step away from manhood. Further, Hallows suggests that stepping away from the financial provider role makes a man "immediately" unappealing to their partner. And to avoid being held accountable for this position, Hallows uses a distanced footing (Goffman, 1981), implying that he is only passing on information that he has "heard" and not just once, but "at some length" from a primary caregiving father. Similarly, Kulp (2013) denies primary caregiving fathers a legitimate masculinity, suggesting they "box up" or put aside their masculinity when they cease paid employment. Not only does Kulp work up an account of a wounded masculinity, but suggests that this leads to a wounded identity more generally – constructing men as having no pride or self-worth and that they are irrelevant when they take on primary caregiving.

The extracts presented above suggest that giving up the provider role results in significant loss and hardship. The rhetorical work within such a construction is complex. The extracts reproduce the long held normative notion that fathers are financial providers. In doing so they work up an account that is positioned as both credible and knowledgeable on what it means to be a father. Of course such positioning is dilemmatic: in working up an account in which not earning an income is a loss, this does very little to depict primary caregiving as something that men should undertake. One way in which this dilemma is negotiated is through constructing fathers as not choosing the primary caregiving role, but instead, finding themselves in this role due to circumstance. This also lends a pathway to caregiving that does not result in a wounded masculinity, as it is outside of their control.

> I had never planned on being a stay-at-home dad, although adjusting to life on my wage alone clearly did not make economic sense (Robertson, 2012, p. 55)

> My boss informed me that I was 'involuntarily terminated' (Baylies & Toonkel, 2004, p. 2)

As demonstrated in these two extracts, primary caregiving is not something fathers necessarily undertake voluntarily. Rather, they are positioned in this role by accident or due to circumstances. One book rests its entire narrative on this notion, titling the book *Dad or Alive: Confessions of an Unexpected Stay-at-Home Dad* (Kulp, 2013). The action orientation of this title is clear – it allows the men to retain their masculinity as they had never intended on being a primary caregiver. However, by implication it suggests that it would be less masculine to intentionally plan to be a primary caregiver. Unsurprisingly, then, across all of the books, there is no discussion of men choosing or planning to take on this role.

A second way in which the dilemma (between encouraging primary caregiving for fathers whilst still acknowledging that not earning an income is a loss) is overcome is through constructing the primary caregiving role as temporary, and thus a "time out" from paid employment, rather than a permanent withdrawal from the paid workplace:

> Many stay at home Dads do not expect to retain the primary carer role once the children go to school (Hallows, 2004, p. 159)

> Get a part-time job once all your kids are in school. Your wife will appreciate the extra help (Cookson, 2013, p. 18)

> 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)

These extracts make clear that primary caregiving does not become a part of the father's identity, but simply a role they take on temporarily. Hallows uses a consensus warrant to emphasise that this is not something only some fathers feel, but "many" feel that this role is only temporary. Further, in Cookson's (2013) extract we can see how the author tells fathers that they should get a "part-time job". Here we can see, even in a book encouraging fathers to take on primary caregiving, fathers are being told and reminded that they should do all they can to remain tied to the financial provider role. Baylies and Toonkel's (2004) extract too reinforces this idea by suggesting that fathers "owe" it to their family to return to work in some capacity once their children have gone to school.

Significantly, this interpretative repertoire relies heavily upon heteronormativity to

substantiate its legitimacy. The authors draw upon dominant beliefs that people fall into one of two genders that come with associated roles. In order words, even though the books discuss fathers who are caregivers, and mothers who work, ultimately the books position women as natural caregivers and men as natural financial providers. The implication then is that heterosexuality is the norm, as these two genders are complimentary and rely on one another. The books thus implicitly align themselves with heterosexual marriage and the traditional nuclear family structure (Hunter & Riggs, 2015).

Established masculinity

Once the books have drawn upon a repertoire of fathers as financial providers, their discursive work then turns to their goal of convincing fathers that taking on the primary caregiving role is normal and legitimate for men. Therefore, the books draw upon a repertoire of an established masculinity in order to achieve this.

The presented identity of the author of these books, and the likelihood of readers identifying with it, plays a fundamental role in the success of the argument they put forward (Lupton & Barclay, 1997). Readers will either accept or refute claims made, based on inferences they make about the author's identity. This is a significant aspect of talk and text – the authors' stake and interest (Potter, 1996). The authors of the books analysed can have something to gain or can put themselves at risk through their descriptions. Therefore this repertoire of an established masculinity works to manage their stake and interest and appeal to the predicted readership, especially given their account that fathers are financial providers.

As caregiving is traditionally associated with femininity, the effects of this repertoire ensures that primary caregiving fathers' masculinities are not brought into question when they take on the caregiving role. This is achieved through aligning descriptions of primary

caregiving fathers with hegemonic masculinity. These accounts construct fathers as though they have already established or "proven" their masculinity, as can be seen in the following quotes.

> In truth, the beer-and-rum soaked Mad Cow tavern with its black-and-white façade, udder bar and saloon-style décor was a great place to get into a fight on a Friday night or, it would seem, to fall in love. (Robertson, 2012, p.3)

> I've been a die-hard baseball fan for as long as I can remember. My dad and I used to play catch every day during the summer when he got home from work...I can almost remember sitting in the living room watching the game with my dad and uncles, systematically cruising around the coffee table, stealing the backwash from the bottom of their Heinekens, and clapping along with them. It was male bonding at its best. (Kulp, 2013, p.3-4)

These two extracts are the opening sentences of two of the books. Orienting toward the possibility that primary caregiving fathers may be viewed as transgressive of normative masculinities, these extracts demonstrate how masculinity is used as the entry point to engage readers on primary caregiving, by attempting to centre it within hegemonic masculinity. The authors are presented as people who the readers can relate to, and this is derived from the extreme markers of hegemonic masculinity. The first extract begins by detailing how the author met his wife. The heteronormativity of this, in itself, works to masculinise the author. The author presents himself as the type of person who spends his Friday night at a pub, which is arguably a masculine stereotype. And this "tavern" is constructed with rich details which evoke connotations aligned with traditional masculinity. For example, "beer" and "rum" are

considered stereotypically masculine drinks, and so for a "tavern" to be described as "soaked" in these drinks suggests that this tavern is a place suited only for traditionally masculine men. In addition, the author describes this tavern as a place where one would get into a fight: again behaviour that is typically associated with traditional, even hyper, masculinity. This description ends with the author outlining that this tavern is not the type of place you would fall in love, by saying "it would seem", which suggests that he was surprised that he met a woman there who he could (and did) fall in love with.

The second extract describes the author's relationship with his own father, detailing stories to do with them and baseball. Drawing upon stories relating to baseball and beer are arguably very stereotypically masculine past times. As well, the author mentions his father and how he worked, therefore positioning himself as someone who grew up in a traditional family where his father was the financial provider.

These two extracts exemplify the detailed discursive work that goes into normalising primary caregiving for men. From the outset, both authors attempt to establish their credentials as typical and traditional men. By presenting themselves as having established masculinities prior to taking on this role, their masculinity is protected from being challenged or potentially undermined. "Proving" one's masculinity in order to be accepted within this role has been identified in previous literature, specifically where primary caregiving fathers emphasise that they took on this role as they felt they were "masculine enough" to take on a traditionally feminine role (e.g., Rochlen, Suizzo, McKelley & Scaringi, 2008; Wall & Arnold, 2007).

In addition to working up a background context of established masculinity, the authors also draw upon an established masculinity repertoire throughout the books as well. The use of this repertoire throughout the books can be understood as stake inoculation - the discursive process through which an individual minimizes or denies their stake and

interest in their descriptions (Potter, 1996). The authors' descriptions continually orient to the possibility that primary caregiving fathers may be viewed as different and outside of the norm. Therefore, the authors align themselves and primary caregiving fathers with hegemonic masculinity, working to counter potential criticisms that they are different:

> Before I became a 'domestic goddess,' I bought into the myth that any man who stayed home to care for the kids wasn't truly a man. Not only is it a-typical, but men in this profession are seen as somewhat weak for not being able to cut it in the 'working world'. (Mastin, 2010, p. 65)

> Not only do girls expect to be moms someday, but they also start their training very early on. Girls grow up playing house, playing with baby dolls, pushing toy strollers, and flipping plastic pancakes with plastic spatulas in their plastic kitchens. I had GI Joes and Transformers. If you dug through my toy chest, you might think I would have a career in freedom fighting or advanced robotics – not fatherhood. (Schatz, 2009, p. 17)

These two extracts build accounts that present both authors as not the type of men who desired to be primary caregivers, positioning them as "normative" men. Mastin (2010) describes that he previously believed that primary caregiving was unmasculine, describing such men as weak, atypical, and not real men. And in the second extract, Schatz (2009) not only aligns himself with the position that primary caregiving was not part of his plan, and it was not something that he wanted, but he distances himself completely from the entire notion of fatherhood. Schatz positions himself with the heteronormative assumption that mothers are the natural caregivers, not fathers, by stating that "girls expect to be moms", detailing the

various aspects of a girl's upbringing that make her suited to caregiving.

It is also worth noting the term "domestic goddess" in Mastin's (2010) extract. This term appears to feminize the primary caregiving role, which works in opposition to all the detailed work that has gone into building these fathers up as masculine. However, it could be argued that Mastin depicts primary caregiving fathers as so masculine that being called a domestic goddess does not threaten their masculinity. It is significant, though, that this extract also defines primary caregiving as a "profession". This discursive work arguably masculinises caregiving, potentially undoing any damage caused by offering up a view of primary caregiving fathers as feminine.

The authors establish their location within traditional norms of masculinity in order for their claims that primary caregiving is a legitimate and normative role for men to be taken as credible. However, proving one's membership to a category is not often simple, therefore membership often has to be worked up and achieved (Potter, 1996). The discursive work in this interpretative repertoire demonstrates the authors establishing and building up their category entitlements to traditional norms of masculinity – they are establishing their legitimate membership to this group despite what others might suggest due to their caregiving role.

Masculine caregiving

Even though men are departing from traditional norms of masculinity when they take on the primary caregiving role, a masculine caregiving repertoire is drawn on to argue that they do not simultaneously lose their masculinity. Fathers are constructed as providing care in a way that is uniquely masculine. The discursive work within this repertoire can be likened to Wetherell and Edley's (1999) argument that very few men reproduce or align themselves with hegemonic masculinity, but rather draw upon hegemonic values to demonstrate a

departure from hegemony. Therefore, this next repertoire draws upon these masculine qualities in order to legitimise and normalise the caregiving role for fathers, as can be seen in the following quotes:

> There's no doubt that playtime with Dad is a bit more physical than it is with my wife. I like to get down on my hands and knees and let the kids jump on my back like they're riding a horse. My wife is a bit too dainty to do that and prefers a less rough and tumble playtime when they're together (Mastin, 2010, pp. 56-57)

> Kids need to learn from playing, using their imagination, and even falling down. That's what dads bring to the table (Schatz, 2009, p. 150)

> Expect dads to do things differently from moms. Women ask for directions. Men use tools. Face it, men and women *are* different, in their parenting styles as well as in other ways, and their differences should be recognised and embraced (Gill, 2001, p. 50)

These three extracts exemplify how, despite primary caregiving fathers breaking away from traditional models of fathering, they embed masculine qualities within the caregiving role. For example, fathers are described using stereotypically masculine traits such as "hands on", "physical", "playful", and that they "use tools". Thus fathers are not being praised on their parenting skills, but on their ability to bring masculine qualities to the primary caregiving role. This repertoire was prominent throughout the books, so much so that even the title of one of the books *Captain Dad: The Manly Art of Stay-at-Home Parenting* (Byrnes, 2013) describes fathers providing primary care as an artistic demonstration of masculinity. It could be argued that the books suggest that a man is especially masculine if he is able to take on a

traditionally feminine role, and make it masculine. Again, this is similar to Wetherell and Edley's (1999) exploration of gender non-conformity. What is celebrated in these discourses is not that men are becoming less masculine, but that they are masculine enough to engage in these potentially belittling activities.

This idea of a masculine caregiving is further substantiated by a reliance on a gender essentialist argument. All three extracts draw on traditional essentialist notions that men and women have inherent and unique attributes due to their gender, and therefore, mothers and fathers have unique parenting styles. This idea can be seen, for example when Schatz (2009, p. 150) claims "that's what dads bring to the table", and when Gill (2001, p. 50) asserts that "men and women *are* different". However, attempts to dismantle currently accepted norms is a difficult task, and it is not surprising that these extracts draw on persuasive language such as "there's no doubt" (Mastin 2010, pp. 56-57) and that we should "expect dads" (Gill, 2001, p. 50) to provide primary care differently to mothers. These extracts draw on empiricist repertoires of facticity (Potter, 1996) to persuade readers that this is not simply the account of the author, but that it is a well-known fact that fathers provide care in masculine ways. Interestingly, the books also drew upon this repertoire in order to manage direct threats to primary caregiving fathers' masculinity:

> I'm the guy in charge, and I'm doing this my way. The guy way. Don't call me Mr. Mom (Byrnes, 2013, p. v)

> Among the various negative comments that at-home dads hear from people, the one they find the most annoying is being called Mr. Mom (Baylies & Toonkel 2004, p. 10)

These two extracts exemplify how primary caregiving fathers take issue with being labelled

in ways that scrutinize their masculinity and suggest that they take on the role of a mother. Byrnes (2013) in the first extract emphasises this by arguing that these fathers are not male mothers, but are doing it the "guy way". Here the author distinguishes that primary caregiving as a father is distinct from primary caregiving as a mother. Further, Baylies and Toonkel (2004) describe how being likened to a male mother is the worst insult for primary caregiving fathers. This significantly outlines how fathers seek to be categorised in a way that acknowledges their masculinity, rather than stripping them of it. Some authors sought to recategorise fathers using "captain dad" (Byrnes, 2013), and "full time father" (Hallows, 2004). These categories include the fathers' parental role, "dad" and "father", combined with a hegemonic trait, "captain" and "full time" (the implication being full-time paid work outside of the home). The effect of using hegemonic qualities within the title highlights that primary caregiving can be masculine.

It is clear these books work hard to advocate that primary caregiving fathers are masculine, and seek to problematise threats to this masculinity. This repertoire of masculine caregiving establishes that it is possible for fathers to take on a traditionally feminine role and be considered masculine. However, through doing so, they may also potentially marginalise some fathers. The extracts analysed demonstrate that for fathers to be considered masculine within the primary caregiving role, they must not want to be considered similar to mothers. Therefore, fathers who do not feel their masculinity is threatened, and are happy to be, or want to be considered, similar to mothers, are at risk of being marginalised and considered unmasculine.

Inferiors to mothers

The analysis so far demonstrates the rhetorical work that functions to normalise and legitimise primary caregiving for men by positioning primary caregiving fathers as

masculine. The books, nonetheless, orient toward men who are considering the primary caregiver role. That is, men who are, to varying degrees, breaking away from traditional, financial provision, notions of fathering. Therefore the books cannot simply align primary caregiving fathers with hegemonic masculinity and traditional masculinities alone. The books must attend to the possibility that their readership may be engaging in a delicate negotiation between ideals of the new, involved father, and the traditional, financial provider father. This is accomplished by drawing upon a repertoire of fathers as essentially inferior caregivers to mothers. The implication being that irrespective of what form of masculinities or ideals a father aligns with, fathers who take on the primary caregiving role remain within normative boundaries of masculinity as they will always remain distinct and inferior to mothers. The following two quotes illustrate this point:

> As strong as your bond may be with your son, always know that his mother's bond is equally great or stronger since she is the one who carried the child in her womb for nine months. That's a closeness that a father cannot duplicate, no matter what (Mastin, 2010, p. 102)

> It is at this moment that I realise that role reversal perhaps doesn't work. Pretend as we might but it feels to me that there is something incredible unnatural about the situation playing out. Maybe children should be with their mothers (Robertson, 2012, p. 181)

In the first extract, fathers are positioned as incapable of having a bond with their child the way that a mother does, which is attributed to biology. This biological essentialist view of gender rests on the argument that there is a particular nature that belongs uniquely to "males" and "females", and which exhaustively explains differences in behaviour (Bem, 1993). This

use of biological essentialism works to denaturalise male caregiving, and implies mothers as biologically superior caregivers. The rhetorical effect is that it masculinises male caregiving. Fathers, no matter how involved they are, can never approximate caregiving like a mother due to the "biological bond" mothers have. Whilst it may seem counterintuitive to present fathers as inferior when the aim of the books is to encourage fathers to take on this role, by suggesting fathers are inferior, the authors distinguish fathers as distinctly different from mothers. This results in fathers being assured that regardless of how involved a caregiver they are, they will remain within normative masculine boundaries.

We can see how this is further accomplished in the second extract. By using language such as "unnatural", fathers are positioned as not being the preferred caregiver. Fathers are also constructed in this extract as "pretend(ing)" when they take on this role. Mothers are positioned as the "natural" and "rightful" caregiver, and the implication then is that fathers can take this role on, but they will never approximate a mother. To ward off criticism, these claims are substantiated by drawing upon a discourse of heteronormativity. This is accomplished when the authors emphasise that children prefer mothers over fathers as their caregiver.

> Children still turn to their mothers more often for comfort, no matter who the primary caregiver is (Baylies & Toonkel, 2004, p. 36)

This extract works to distinguish the categories of "primary caregiver" and "mother". A father may take on the primary caregiver role, but he cannot replace the role of the mother. The books draw on the normative idea of mothers as the primary caregiver, and the extract presents this as something outside of control as it derives from the children themselves. This idea of children desiring a mother as the primary caregiver was drawn on throughout all of

the books. One of the book titles *Daddy, Where's Your Vagina? What I Learned as a Stay-at-Home Dad* (Schatz, 2009) illustrates how children are constructed as confused that fathers are providing the primary care, and also confused that their fathers are not mothers.

This discursive work exemplifies how the books present the notion that fathers can take on the primary caregiving role, but mothers remain the superior parent as a result of their biological connection to their child(ren). As previously mentioned, this appears to be counterintuitive and potentially undermining of the main purpose of these books: that is to normalise and legitimise the role of fathers as primary caregivers. What is happening here is an inherent contradiction between ideologies of caregiving. The books simultaneously promote and discourage fathers as primary caregivers. This ideological dilemma (Billig et al., 1988) demonstrates the complexity surrounding primary caregiving fathers. The contradiction and ambivalence toward fathers taking on this role exemplifies the shifting of normative understandings of fathering. The books are forced to negotiate with traditional, provider expectations of fathers as well as new, and involved expectations. Therefore positioning fathers as primary caregivers as both normative as well as transgressive demonstrates the challenge facing the authors. One way in which the books work to negotiate this ideological dilemma, as discussed in this final interpretative repertoire, is to suggest that it is acceptable and masculine for fathers to be primary caregivers, however, only if they are not too successful in the role. If a father were to be highly successful in the primary caregiving role, then he is approximating the role of a mother, positioning himself as feminine. As this is potentially demeaning, the books position fathers as inherently inferior as caregivers compared with mothers in order to ensure their masculine position.

Discussion

The analysis presented in this paper has explored the discursive and rhetorical strategies

employed within books written for primary caregiving fathers. In particular, it has been argued that these books work to legitimise and normalise primary caregiving for men. The analysis presented demonstrates the complex and dilemmatic negotiations men face in relation to masculinities and their fathering identity. It can be argued that the books are written on the premise of an ideological dilemma (Billig et al., 1988). They advocate for men as primary caregivers, therefore encouraging the introduction of a caring masculinity and a new and involved father. However, they are required to negotiate with expectations for fathers to be financial providers due to the enduring nature of hegemonic masculinity.

The first interpretative repertoire examined in this analysis demonstrated how the books present an honest account of what it means to be a primary caregiving father. This involved describing how fathers remain tied to the expectation that they should be financial providers, even when they take on the primary caregiving role. Through doing this, the books are able to demonstrate their credibility. However, this repertoire undermines their work to encourage and support fathers as primary caregivers. This finding is unique as no previous literature has explored constructions of fathers within texts written explicitly for primary caregiving fathers.

The remainder of the analysis explored three other interpretative repertoires that work to discursively undo the potential damage of reproducing and reinforcing the norm of fathers as financial providers. The established masculinity repertoire is drawn upon to convince readers that demonstrating an established masculinity prior to taking on the caregiver role ensures that one's masculinity is not brought into question, damaged, or revoked. This again, was a unique finding, although can be likened to empirical work that has identified primary caregiving fathers speaking of feeling "masculine enough" to take on what is considered a traditionally feminine role (Rochlen, Suizzo, McKelley & Scaringi, 2008; Wall & Arnold, 2007). What is celebrated in these discourses is not that men are taking on femininity, but that

they are masculine enough to engage in these potentially belittling activities.

The books also drew on a repertoire that fathers have a uniquely masculine way of providing care, which worked to demonstrate that men are not feminine when in the primary caregiver role, but can still exercise their masculinity. This is similar to Vuori (2009) and Sunderland's (2000) findings that fathers are welcomed to fatherhood; however masculinity is used as the entry point to engage fathers, constructing them as lively, physical and playful compared to mothers.

And finally, the books drew upon a repertoire of fathers as inferior caregivers to mothers, to ensure that irrespective of the form of masculinity that fathers approximate, they cannot be likened to mothers, and thus femininity. This is similar to previous analyses of parenting texts that have demonstrated that fathers are frequently positioned as helpers with less competence than mothers (Fleming & Tobin, 2005; Sunderland, 2000, 2006; Vuori, 2009; Wall & Arnold, 2007). Taken together, these four interpretative repertoires ensure that primary caregiving fathers can be positioned within the normative boundaries of hegemonic masculinity.

The aim of this analysis was to highlight the function of these books, and it found that these books work to normalise and legitimise primary caregiving for fathers. However, the books navigate and negotiate complex norms relating to fathering and masculinity in order to accomplish this aim. Another aim of this analysis, though, was to highlight the broader cultural implications of these constructions and positionings of primary caregiving fathers. At this broader level, the books analysed can be argued to reinforce and privilege hegemonic masculinity. It could be that the books achieve this simply because hegemonic masculinity is the widely accepted norm, therefore the authors are required to draw on it as a resource. However, what the books do is reinforce and perpetuate hegemonic masculinity as a norm, rather than challenge it. These books seek to normalise and legitimise primary caregiving, but

they are, normalising and legitimising a form of masculinity that serves to subordinate such a role for men.

Importantly, it must be acknowledged that the sample was relatively small. Although identified as the most recent and popular books published made available for primary caregiving fathers, it is difficult to ascertain the degree of influence these books may have. Further, it is important to acknowledge that parenting texts are written specifically to sell, so we cannot know or speak to the authors' intentions. What is significant, however, is the similarities identified between the two types of books analysed. Drawing on both parenting manuals that are marketed as instruction guides, as well as books written as autobiographical narratives, it is surprising that there were no differences in the constructions of primary caregiving fathers. The only difference identified across these types of books was the way in which these constructions were worked up – through drawing on empirical research or anecdotal and personal experience, respectively. Both, however, rely on the claims and category entitlements made by experts on primary caregiving fathers.

To provide a fuller understanding of constructions of primary caregiving fathers, future research might utilise this critical psychological approach to analyse books written for fathers from different cultures, ethnicities, political contexts and social classes in order to determine if hegemonic masculinity is guiding understandings of what it means to be a primary caregiving father. Based on the complexity of the findings, it is important for future theorisations of fathering to pay close attention to how mothering is concurrently constructed and understood. Focusing on evolving and changing norms relating to fathering and masculinity need to be contextualised in what this means for the gendered divisions of carework, in order to determine if changes in masculinity actually contribute to shifting gender norms.

In conclusion, the books present an account that suggests very specific ways in which

it is deemed appropriate for men to take on primary caregiving. Fathers must remain tied to their financial provider role, they must demonstrate an established masculinity, they must provide care in a masculine way, and they must remain inferior caregivers to mothers. This has important implications for how we theorise and understand primary caregiving fathers. It is important that as researchers we focus on taking a critical approach to accounts that seek to encourage primary caregiving, as they can simultaneously produce accounts of primary caregiving that fits within norms of established hegemonic masculinity.

Statement of authorship

Title of Paper	Ideological dilemmas in accounts of primary caregiving fathers in Australian news media
Publication Status	☑ Published ☐ Accepted for Publication ☐ Submitted for Publication ☐ Unpublished and Unsubmitted work written in manuscript style
Publication Details	Hunter, S. C., Augoustinos, M. & Riggs, D. W. (2017). Ideological dilemmas in accounts of primary caregiving fathers in Australian news media. *Discourse, Context & Media, 20*, 116-123. doi: doi.org/10.1016/j.dcm.2017.09.005

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Contribution to the Paper	Performed analysis on all samples, interpreted data, wrote manuscript and acted as corresponding author.
Overall percentage	85%
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: 29/11/2017

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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Chapter 4: Paper 3

Ideological dilemmas in accounts of primary caregiving fathers in Australian news media

Norms and expectations regarding fathers are changing, with fathers now expected to be more involved in caregiving. One consequence of this is an increase in fathers who assume the primary caregiving role. The study reported in this paper involved a discourse analysis of 176 Australian newspaper articles that focused on primary caregiving fathers. Three recurring interpretative repertoires pertaining to primary caregiving fathers were identified, suggesting contradictory and dilemmatic accounts of this role. These were: 1) advocating for primary caregiving fathers, 2) comparing the past and present, and 3) barriers to father involvement. Overall, when describing the "typical" father who provides primary care, the articles promoted the evolving cultural ideal of fathers as involved and nurturing caregivers, however they nonetheless justified continued gendered inequalities in parenting. Therefore, despite claims that new models of fathering are encouraged and promoted in Western cultures, the analysis demonstrates that media accounts construct and reproduce hegemonic masculinity. The paper concludes by suggesting that a more critical lens should be applied to claims of support for greater father involvement, as despite structural and social support in favour of involved fathering, this support is comprised of contradictory elements that simultaneously undermine this emerging ideal.

Introduction

In recent years, what are seen as seismic shifts with regard to father involvement have been of increased academic and cultural interest (Doucet & Merla, 2007; Duckworth & Buzzanell, 2009; Latshaw & Hale, 2015; Rochlen, Suizzo, McKelley & Scaringi, 2008). In particular, there has been a focus on the growing number of fathers who assume a primary caregiving role, referring specifically to men in heterosexual relationships who take the lead in providing day-to-day care for their children (Chesley, 2011). Such fathers, it has been suggested, break away from the traditionally held assumption that fathers are the "secondary" parent, where caregiving is predominantly considered "women's work" (Fleming & Tobin 2005; Maurer & Pleck, 2006).

To date, research on primary caregiving fathers has focused on exploring 1) what motivates men to take on the primary caregiving role, 2) negative reactions and attitudes toward men who undertake this role, 3) the various coping strategies such men use when faced with negativity, and 4) how they negotiate their fathering and masculine identity (e.g., Burkstrand-Reid 2012; Chesley 2011; Doucet & Merla, 2007; Dunn, Rochlen & O'Brien, 2013; Fischer & Anderson, 2012; Latshaw, 2011; Latshaw & Hale, 2015; Rochlen, McKelley, Suizzo & Scaringi, 2008; Rochlen, Suizzo, McKelley & Scaringi, 2008). Understandably, much of this research has focused on constructions of masculinity amongst primary caregiving fathers given paid work – and the assumption that men will be financial providers – has long been understood as fundamental to the fathering identity (Hanlon, 2012; Medved, 2016; Petroski & Edley, 2006; Whelan & Lally, 2002).

This subject position of father-as-provider legitimates a socially valued form of masculinity and therefore can be viewed as hegemonic. As such, and despite ambiguity and debate surrounding the concept of hegemonic masculinity (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Donaldson, 1993; Edley & Wetherell, 1995; Speer, 2001; Wetherell & Edley, 1999), it is a

theoretically useful tool for conceptualising the experiences of primary caregiving fathers. Hegemonic masculinity can be understood as an ideology that mandates certain forms of masculinity as most laudable, in comparison to all women and men who are depicted as effeminate (Connell, 1987). Few men achieve the hegemonic ideal, of course, however all are measured against it (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Plantin, Mansson & Kearney, 2003). This is perhaps especially true for primary caregiving fathers who step away from the financial provider role, who are then by default located outside the hegemonic norm for fathering.

In order to account for how primary caregiving fathers negotiate a place within the hegemonic norm, the notion of a "caring masculinity" has emerged to account for how contemporary fathers are encouraged to explore a more nurturing and caregiving aspect of their fathering identity (Ammari & Schoenebeck, 2015; Elliott, 2015). The idea of a "new" father has been extensively discussed in the literature, and there is considerable emphasis on the benefits of a father who is attentive, caring, and involved (Henwood & Procter, 2003). For primary caregiving fathers, the idea of a "caring masculinity" both offers them a space within a new norm, whilst still positioning them as outside the more traditional hegemonic position of the father-as-provider (Medved, 2016).

One cultural site where tensions between a caring masculinity and more traditionally hegemonic masculinities are evident is in the media. Popular culture plays a significant role in the production of discourse, which in turn can create pressures and expectations that men must navigate (Lupton & Barclay, 1997). Necessary, then, is research that considers how discourses of fathering are constructed and reproduced in the media, and the implications of such discourses. The present paper thus reports on a discourse analysis of Australian news media reports focused on primary caregiving fathers. Before presenting the analysis, an overview is first provided of previous research on primary caregiving fathers in the media.

Previous research on primary caregiving fathers in the media

Lupton and Barclay (1997) argue that news media constitutes a crucial source of information on fatherhood. How fathers construct ideas of what it means to be a father is largely based on what intelligible identities are made available to them. The media is one site in which regulatory notions of what is appropriate, expected, and normal with regard to fatherhood are presented (Blackman & Walkerdine, 2001). Despite the media's claims to objectively report on world events, these accounts should more properly be understood as social constructions, drawing upon existing norms and available discourses (Eldridge, 1993). The discourses deployed in these accounts have repercussions and consequences, often not intended or understood by the writer (Wetherell & Potter, 1988). It is therefore important to examine the ideological consequences of how primary caregiving fathers are constructed.

Even though research has documented the positive effects of involved fatherhood (Marsiglio & Pleck, 2005), a relative lack of fatherhood presence within the media reinforces the long standing assumption that fathers are secondary, and sometimes, unnecessary, to the caregiving process (Schmitz, 2016). For example, a study by Winter and Pauwels (2006) analysed all newspaper articles focused on primary caregiving fathers published in 2004 in a variety of countries. They identified how the articles focus on both current and previous paid employment when describing primary caregiving fathers, highlighting the need to demonstrate an "other", more traditionally masculine, role. Similarly, Liong's (2015) study of representations of primary caregiving fathers within Hong Kong newspapers found that such fathers were depicted as remaining tied to the public sphere, especially middle-to-upper class fathers. This connection to the public sphere, while undertaking the primary caregiving role, served to position these fathers as aspiring to return to paid employment, demonstrating that they were still invested in their provider role, thus demonstrating a legitimate and socially

valued masculinity. This provider ideology was not challenged within the news articles examined by Liong, instead, it was used to praise primary caregiving fathers for their sacrifice to giving up their economic power and careers.

In the limited research conducted on Australian media representations, Stevens (2015) found that primary caregiving is not framed as a personal choice for fathers, but instead results from circumstances. The news excerpts examined by Stevens suggested that if it were not for structural constraints or economic hardships, primary caregiving fathers would prefer to be financial providers. Overall, the news media examined by Stevens emphasised the traditionally masculine attributes of primary caregiving fathers, specifically by framing involved fathering as an addition to paid employment. Therefore, the ideal image of a contemporary father is one who is both a financial provider and an involved father (Stevens, 2015).

Whilst the present study is situated within the broader context of research that has been conducted in a variety of countries, this does not suggest an aim to identify a universal construction or experience of all primary caregiving fathers. There are limitations inherent in attempting to draw comparisons across different national and cultural contexts, as fathering is constructed through specific social, cultural and historical contexts. As such, the study reported here sought to further focus on news media representations of primary caregiving fathers within the Australian context, reflecting as they likely do the specificities of Australian discourses, policies and practices with regard to fathering, as will be discussed later in this paper.

Method

The data examined in this study are derived from news media accounts of primary caregiving fathers. Articles that focused specifically on the lives and experiences of these fathers were

included for analysis: articles that only fleetingly mentioned them were excluded. Further, it was decided to exclude the search term “house husbands” due to the number of articles retrieved relating to the popular Australian television series *House Husbands*. Such articles focused largely or exclusively on the actors, ratings, season renewals, etc. of this series, and were therefore not deemed relevant for this analysis.

A search was conducted of all Australian newspapers within the Factiva database. The articles analysed were sourced from the two major Australian publically-listed newspaper proprietors (Fairfax and News Ltd), which represent the political left – right spectrum of newsprint journalism in Australia respectively. The following search terms were used: "stay-at-home dads", "stay at home dads", "stay-at-home fathers", "stay at home fathers", "caregiving dads", “caregiving fathers", "men who mother", “Mr. Mom”, and “Mr. Mum”. These search terms are the most commonly used terms as identified by the academic literature reviewed in the introduction to the present paper. The search was restricted to articles published over a 5 year period, between 1st January 2012 and 20th October 2016.

In total, 351 articles were found using these criteria. After excluding 101 articles due to being duplicates, and excluding articles that were not relevant, 176 articles remained for analysis.

Analytic approach

There are many forms of discourse analysis, but all share a concern with the meanings that people negotiate in social interaction, and the ways in which everyday talk is shaped by cultural forces (Gough & McFadden, 2001). This paper draws on discourse analysis in a way that focuses on the socially constructed nature of fathering. Such an approach enables the analysis to capture the complex, inconsistent, and contradictory accounts of masculinity and fathering. In particular, it allows us to appreciate how contemporary fathering is organised

around ideological dilemmas (Billig et al., 1988). Billig et al.'s (1988) defines ideology as common sense thinking that is frequently dilemmatic and contradictory. This understanding of ideology as inconsistent and contradictory is important, as it demonstrates that ideology is not simply a set of attitudes, but rather, is form of sense making. Analytically, then, ideological dilemmas are useful as they are a means of exploring competing and conflicting accounts of sense making.

Initially, all 176 articles were read by the first author, to identify key interpretative repertoires pertaining to primary caregiving fathers. Wetherell and Potter (1992) define interpretative repertoires as "broadly discernable clusters of terms, descriptions and figures of speech often assembled around metaphors or vivid images" (p. 90). As they go on to note, identifying and examining interpretative repertoires is "a way of understanding the *content* of discourse and how that content is organized" (original emphasis). The initial analysis conducted found that the news articles examined framed interpretative repertoires pertaining to primary caregiving fathers through a series of ideological dilemmas (Billig et al., 1988). Specifically, the initial analysis produced findings that mirrored previous theorisations of gender inequality, such as Wetherell et al.'s (1987) investigation of how university students endorsed equal opportunities for men and women, whilst at the same time, emphasising practical considerations that justified continuing inequality, and Edley and Wetherell's (1999) investigation of the ways in which young men described desiring an involved fathering experience in theory, whilst at the same time providing reasons why this may not be practical.

The patterns identified by the first author were then reviewed by the other two authors, with the latter agreeing with the patterns identified by the first author. The analysis that follows, then, is structured around the ideological dilemmas identified, and exemplary extracts were selected for further in-depth analysis. The analysis below also examines rhetorical devices and discourse analytic concepts derived from discursive psychology

(Potter, 1996). This allows for a closer examination of the contents of the ideological dilemmas by focusing on the constructive and action-oriented nature of the language used, thus considering what the text is doing, accomplishing, and constructing (Potter, 1996). Through this approach, the analysis demonstrates a principle/practice dichotomy, endorsing primary caregiving fathers in principle, but undermining this by arguing that such caregiving is constrained by what are construed as practical considerations.

Analysis

The analysis is organised into three interpretative repertoires, all of which demonstrate the principle/practice dichotomy of endorsing primary caregiving fathers in theory, but suggesting it is difficult in practice. The first repertoire relates to how primary caregiving fathers are advocated for within the newspaper articles. The second focuses on how the news articles construct the past and present as either/or contrasts in order to argue that contemporary fathers have come a long way. Finally, the third repertoire pays attention to three particular barriers to fathers' inclusion in caregiving.

Advocating for primary caregiving fathers

Overall, primary caregiving was framed positively within the news media articles. The articles all advocated and promoted primary caregiving for fathers. However, this advocacy was framed more as an ideal, rather than a realistic or practicable goal. The following extracts demonstrate how the news articles present fathers in contemporary society as no longer adhering to inegalitarian models of fathering. Parenting is constructed as a mutual and egalitarian relationship between a mother and father. This account works to justify and promote primary caregiving fathers, as such fathers are positioned as not departing from the norm, but rather are aligned with the shifting and contemporary norms and expectations of

fathers.

Extract 1

"Manning up For Role Change" – Wentworth Courier (28/09/2016)

There was a time when it would have seemed odd for a husband to stay at home with the children when the wife went to work. But Jonathon Smith, of Clovelly, said he was part of a growing number of stay-at-home-dads embracing the role of the primary carer.

Extract 2

"My Dad, Phil Hillier, Passed Away Last Week" – Wyndham Weekly (18/03/2015)

The parental roles today are so much more flexible and shared, and I am so glad that this is the case. In so many families now, dad is not the one who brings home the bacon and mum is not chained to the kitchen. We have learned to share the responsibilities of parenting and working.

These two extracts attend to the political and social context of contemporary parenting, where fathers are now expected to be more involved due to changing norms. Fathers taking on the primary caregiving role are represented largely in a positive, even admirable, light. In Extract 1 the contrast between framing primary caregiving fathers as odd, with fathers now embracing this role, suggests that there has been a shift in thinking in society, demonstrating that inegalitarian gender roles in parenting are no longer acceptable.

Further, Extract 2 states that there is more equality, with partners now sharing the

roles and responsibilities of parenting. The departure from inegalitarian expectations is emphasised through the extreme case formulation (Pomerantz, 1986) that things "are so much more flexible and shared". This formulation works to argue that there has not been just a slight change, but rather a significant improvement. Furthering this claim to change, other news articles also argued that it is no longer rare or unusual for fathers to be primary caregivers:

Extract 3

"Emotional Send-Off" – Port Macquarie News (03/02/2014)

I noticed that there's a lot more dads working part time and doing the Mr Mum thing these days, which I think is fantastic

Extract 3 works to de-emphasise the non-normative status of men as caregivers, by positioning it as no longer rare or unusual. The extract also demonstrates some interesting fact construction work. Drawing on features of the empiricist repertoire (Gilbert & Mulkay, 1984), the construction "I noticed" works to position the following claim as merely a report of what is happening; of the facts, rather than an opinion or belief. The positive evaluation of this claim ("I think is fantastic") provides a strong endorsement of fathers' increasing involvement in the caregiving role. However, at the same time the extract draws on the category "Mr Mum", which reinforces the normative gendered expectation that mothers are primary caregivers, as opposed to a gender neutral account such as "parenting". Not only does this reinforce the construction of mothers as caregivers, but it feminises men who are caregivers. As such, when men take up a primary caregiving role, an interesting and complex situation unfolds. Whilst individual men are feminised for their uptake, caregiving roles are simultaneously reappraised and gain some social value in a broader sense, due to men taking

on these roles. This is an example of men bringing their power and privilege to traditionally feminine and devalued roles.

The following extract demonstrates how despite positive and favourable representations of caregiving fathers in principle, many newspaper articles simultaneously reinstate inegalitarian gender notions of mothers and fathers by positioning them as distinct and not interchangeable roles.

Extract 4

"Strewth" – The Australian (02/06/2015)

`We are all equal. But no Dad can be a Mum or Mum, a Dad.`

Here we see a typical use of a disclaimer (Hewitt & Stokes, 1975). By prefacing the disclaimer with an egalitarian statement ("we are all equal"), the disclaimer works to prevent any accusations of sexism and serves to legitimise the argument that mothering and fathering are distinct roles. This works to position this argument as a fact, rather than a potentially sexist value judgement. This rhetorical strategy of explicitly endorsing liberal ideals, only to be juxtaposed by dubious and arguably sexist constructions of parenting, was a typical and common feature of the data corpus.

This section of the analysis demonstrates how despite advocacy for primary caregiving fathers in newspaper articles, this positive slant was at the same time undermined by reproducing inegalitarian norms of fathering and mothering that questioned the interchangeability of these parenting roles. In these constructions mothers and fathers were positioned as distinct roles that relied on inegalitarian gendered notions of what it is to be a mother or father. Arguably, such accounts, although advocating for the changing role of fathers, at the same time function to limit and constrain primary caregiving fathers.

The past and present – "Fathers have come a long way"

The news articles also suggest that given fathering has progressed so much, we need to focus on celebrating contemporary fathers. Therefore, even though the news articles endorse primary caregiving fathers, they argue that there is no need to expect fathers to be more involved, as they have already achieved so much. Therefore, the news articles set up the past and present as either/or contrasts in order to renegotiate the ideals of father involvement. This is reminiscent of the findings of Wetherell, Stiven and Potter (1987), where they discuss the discursive strategy of focusing on how "times are changing", thus situating the present as better than the past. The need to focus on the present and contemporary fathering is undoubtedly important. Nonetheless, traditional fathering and contemporary fathering are not necessarily mutually exclusive. However, setting up the past and the present as either/or contrasts functions to justify and legitimate the argument that contemporary fathers are highly involved and that there is more equality in the gendered division of carework, and this needs to be celebrated.

Extract 5

"Dads Take Charge of The Home Front" – The Sun Herald (29//03/2015)

There is no doubt men are more comfortable changing nappies, taking their child to the shops and organizing their dinner than previous generations

In Extract 5 contemporary fathers are contrasted with fathers of the past. This works to refocus attention away from the continued limitation of men's involvement, and rather emphasises how there is perhaps no need for change or more involvement. A three-part list

(Jefferson, 1990) is employed, describing how contemporary fathers are highly involved through "changing nappies", "taking their child to the shops", and "organizing their dinner". It is interesting to note here how parenting is limited to simple tasks. Whilst trying to emphasise contemporary fathers' uptake of involved nurturing, the evidence supplied is relatively task focused, which is arguably masculine, and ignores the emotional and feminine aspects of caregiving. Further, a factual tone is established through the use of a rhetorically self-sufficient argument. The claim that there is "no doubt" that men are more competent caregivers than fathers of the past constructs it as a fact that contemporary fathers are meeting the expectations of an involved father. By framing uninvolved fathers as those of "previous generations", it establishes that contemporary fathers, irrespective of their depth of involvement, do not behave in a way that reflects old-fashioned and outdated values.

Extract 6

"Daddy Issues" – Herald Sun (05/09/2015)

Fathers have come a long way since the days when they were distant authority figures. Young dads are showing their determination to outdo their own fathers, by seizing on the role with energy and enthusiasm

The contrast between the past and present is further established in Extract 6, where it is outlined how fathers have actually "come a long way". This account contrasts contemporary fathering with inegalitarian modes of fathering, in which fathers are negatively framed as distant authority figures. The implication from this extract is that contemporary fathers do not need to be measured on the amount of their involvement; rather we should focus on praising fathers for how well they are doing, and how involved they are, in contrast with fathers of the

past.

Significantly, this new and involved model of fathering is depicted as a form of competition with inegalitarian models of fathering. Fathers' "energy and enthusiasm" is not framed as stemming from their interest in being a father, rather they are depicted as more interested in competing and winning at fatherhood. This account masculinises new and involved fathering by drawing upon ideas of determination and seizing opportunities. In a sense, it is implied that fathers who adhere to and approximate inegalitarian models of fathering are less masculine, as they do not seize the opportunity or are not determined. These are all hegemonic masculine norms, and therefore work to embed hegemonic masculinity within this new, involved form of being a father. Therefore, this account trades on traits of hegemonic masculinity in order to normalise a departure from hegemonic masculinity, which is a previously documented form of masculine identity negotiation (Wetherell & Edley, 1999). It is ironic, however, that fathers are constructed as wanting to be more and better than fathers of the past by not adhering to hegemonic masculinity. However, at the same time, they are drawing upon hegemonic masculinity in order to be "better" fathers.

The ideological dilemma of advocating primary caregiving fathers in theory, but not in practice, is discursively managed by the news articles through this contrast between the past and present to renegotiate ideals. The interpretative repertoire discussed here contributes to the argument made by Wetherell, Stiven and Potter (1987), namely that contrasting the past with the present and claiming that things are slowly improving may in fact justify and rationalise the status quo and continuing patterns of gender inequality.

Barriers to inclusion

The two previous interpretative repertoires focused on the ways in which the articles advocated for primary caregiving fathers in theory. This final repertoire, however, focuses

more specifically on the variety of practical reasons and explanations that the news articles mobilised to justify why, in practice, it is unrealistic for fathers to be primary caregivers. These particular reasons were presented as unavoidable facts or just the way things are. Despite their being a degree of legitimacy and weight behind some of these barriers, the news articles mobilise them in a way that presents primary caregiving for men as too difficult, as opposed to providing a critical account of these barriers. In particular, three barriers were argued to prevent or constrain fathers from taking up the primary caregiving role: 1) economic barriers, 2), mothers behaving as "gatekeepers", and 3) struggles and difficulties.

Economic barriers

The legitimacy of primary caregiving fathers as a cultural ideal rests upon the assumption that men and women can equally look after children (Edley & Wetherell, 1999). This, however, challenges a long standing expectation that fathers should be financial providers in order to be considered a "good" father. Therefore, and not surprisingly, this expectation was frequently invoked to justify why, in the end, it makes more economic sense for fathers to engage in full-time paid work rather than caring for children.

Extract 7

"Pay Parity Will Help Stay at Home Dads" – Herald Sun (06/08/2012)

Australian women are paid on average 17 per cent less than men who are doing equivalent jobs, according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics. So when kids come along, it makes economic sense for the woman to stop working while the man continues to slog it out in paid employment

This article draws on quantification rhetoric to validate the claim that it makes more economic sense for fathers to take on the provider role (Potter, Wetherell & Chitty, 1991). As outlined in the extract, the gender pay gap is a socioeconomic reality that can have influence on the decisions of the division of carework in heterosexual couples. However, rather than critique this situation or push for social and structural change, the news article presents this issue as just the way things are. The following extract further demonstrates how statistics were used routinely to argue that financial considerations are paramount when it comes to whether fathers can take on caregiving responsibilities.

Extract 8

"Why Not More Stay-at-Home Dads" – The Age (06/09/2015)

More than half of fathers said parental leave would have to be paid at replacement wage rates if they were to look after their child when the mother went back to work. If they were paid a replacement wage, fathers said the ideal length of parental leave would be nine to 12 months. If they were paid minimum wage, they would take only up to six weeks off.

In Extract 8, fathers are presented as though they do not factor in emotional or personal interests when considering primary caregiving. It is presented as though it simply comes down to economics. If they get paid the "right" amount, they will take on caregiving, if not, it is viewed as not possible. These accounts maintain and reinforce the cultural privilege often afforded to fathers. They are in a position where they can decide if caregiving is worthwhile, and they are able to put a price on their time, whereas women have long been in a position where they do not necessarily get that choice. Yet again, quantification rhetoric works to

make this reproduction of inegalitarian gender roles and hegemonic privilege more rhetorically robust. There is opportunity here for the media to put forward an argument that social policy needs to be re-evaluated in order to encourage father involvement. However, this extract demonstrates how the media instead reproduces the privileged position fathers are in, which only serves to legitimate social policies that hinder father involvement.

Mothers behaving as "gatekeepers"

Another practical barrier offered up to justify why it is unrealistic for fathers to be primary caregivers, is that mothering acts as a form of gatekeeping. Fathers are depicted as not being in a position to take on caregiving unless the mother has chosen to step away from it first. Extracts 10 and 11 demonstrate how mothers are positioned as being in control of whether fathers become involved in the care of their children.

Extract 10

"Women Need to Back Away From The Housework" – Mail Online (26/02/2014)

"Women must step back so men can step up," is the message from Clint Greagen, Australia's most successful "daddy blogger".

Extract 11

"Unsung Heroes" – The Sun Herald (06/09/2015)

Hey, superwoman, it's time to give credit where it's due, says Tracey Spicer. They [men] are our secret weapons, but we dare not speak their names.

Extract 10 depicts fathers as not being in a position to take on caregiving unless mothers first

"step back". This description has accountability built into it. Rather than position fathers as responsible, this account presents fathers as wanting to be more involved, but mothers are actively preventing them from doing so. Extract 11 makes the assumption that it is normative for mothers to solely take on the caregiving responsibilities and not acknowledge that fathers can and do play an important role. Fathers are presented as simply helping or assisting mothers, as they are represented here as a mother's "secret weapon". Fathers' secondary role is further emphasised through the category "superwoman", as it positions mothers as having control, power and agency, while fathers are constructed as assistants or helpers. Moreover, mothers are presented as hesitant to acknowledge that they receive help or support from fathers, where they are said to "dare not speak their names". Mothers are constructed as though they desire the full credit for child rearing.

This account of mothers as "getting in the way" of fathers can also be seen in the following extract.

Extract 12

"Unsung Heroes" – The Sun Herald (06/09/2015)

However, many men feel uncomfortable in traditional female roles: some simply don't want to do it; others are excluded. One day, my hubby watched in horror as every mother and toddler in the Gymbaroo circle moved away from him

This article draws on the category entitlement of the author as a "mother" and her partner's first-hand experience of being excluded by other mothers at "Gymbaroo" to demonstrate how many men feel uncomfortable due to feeling excluded. Again, although the article appears to advocate for primary caregiving fathers, it also positions women as their own worst enemy by

making it difficult for men to be accepted into a caregiving role. It is interesting that this construction of mothers behaving at "gatekeepers" sets up paid work and carework as binaries. Within a heterosexual relationship, fathers are positioned as though they cannot be involved in caregiving unless mothers relinquish the role. There is not a discussion of shared parenting with joint responsibilities, which arguably reflects many contemporary family dynamics and also undermines a more equal model of parenting.

Struggles and difficulties

The final barrier accounting for why it is impracticable for fathers to be primary caregivers is that they are likely to face struggles and difficulties beyond those identified already. This account justifies why it may not be a good idea for fathers to take on primary caregiving. This was a rather prominent account, to the extent that there was one article devoted entirely to outlining the variety of difficulties faced by fathers, aptly titled "*Daddy Issues*" (Herald Sun – 05/09/2015).

Extract 13

"Let's Now Sing Mothers' Praises" – Illawarra Mercury (21/03/2015)

Over the past 22 months I've questioned my sanity, experienced chest pains, I've punched my own head with self-pity and frustration and I feel like I've aged by at least a decade

It is clear to see how fathers are positioned here as experiencing negative consequences when taking on the primary caregiving role. Emotive and extreme descriptions such as describing fathers as questioning "their sanity", and experiencing feelings of "self-pity and frustration", function to depict caregiving as extremely challenging. These descriptions could be seen in a

positive light, demonstrating the deserved acknowledgement that carework is difficult. Now that men are engaging in carework there is acknowledgement, and the value of carework becomes visible. This, however, is another example of men's increasing involvement bringing privilege and social value to previously feminised work. The focus on the difficulties, however, may also function to depict men as unsuitable for the caregiving role due to their purported inability to manage the stress and responsibilities of caregiving. This extract misplaces feelings common to parenting in general, and rather repositions them as struggles unique to men.

Fathers are also depicted as experiencing adverse reactions from society when taking on the caregiving role, which serves to make it difficult and almost undesirable for a man to be a primary caregiver.

Extract 14

"Father's Day" – Sunday Mail (07/10/2012)

He said it was "an unfortunate fact of life" that men were viewed suspiciously when seen with children in public. "All the nasty stuff that you hear, abuse and violence towards children, it's largely perpetrated by men so people are naturally suspicious," he said. Mr Wilson said there were practical issues he faced while looking after his children early on. "You would go to change their nappy and you'd find the change facilities were in the ladies' toilets."

Extract 14 describes how fathers are viewed with suspicion when they are seen with children in public. The risk of being perceived as a potential child abuser is highlighted as a serious

problem that primary caregiving fathers face. However, rather than critically examine the prejudice fathers may face and put forward an argument that they deserve better, it is rather framed as an "unfortunate fact of life". This account potentially justifies, normalises, and legitimises why people are apprehensive about caregiving fathers. To further substantiate the difficulties faced by fathers, the extract proceeds to suggest that there are "practical issues" for fathers as well. The extract outlines how change tables are commonly found in female rather than male toilets. Therefore it becomes difficult, and almost impossible, for fathers to take care of their children in public. Again, there is significant accountability work going on in this construction. Two examples are provided, outside of fathers' control, to argue why fathers are compromised in taking on the primary caregiving role.

Conclusion

The initial aim of this paper was to broadly identify the ways in which the news media construct and represent fathers who take on the primary caregiving role. What became apparent, however, was that representations in the news articles were contradictory and inconsistent. Drawing upon the work of Billig et al. (1988), the discourse analysis presented in this paper demonstrates how accounts of contemporary fathering are built upon ideological dilemmas, more specifically the principle/practice dichotomy identified by Wetherell, Stiven and Potter (1987) and Edley and Wetherell (1999), and that this occurred through three interpretative repertoires, namely 1) advocating for primary caregiving fathers, 2) comparing the past and present, and 3) barriers to father involvement.

The three repertoires identified in this study all rest upon an ongoing ideological dilemma: gender equality in principle, but practical constraints in practice (Billig et al., 1988). This dilemma seemed largely to be a product of the fact that advocacy for primary caregiving fathers was constructed as being at odds with the normative expectation that

fathers should be financial providers. Accounts of practical barriers thus served to reproduce inegalitarian norms and expectations associated with fathering, thus further demonstrating how fatherhood continues to be a contested site of competing societal discourses (Lupton & Barclay, 1997; Merla, 2008; Stevens, 2015).

Like Liong's (20105) findings, the news articles examined in the present paper praised fathers for their contribution and their participation in traditionally feminine roles. However, particular to this study is how the news articles positioned fathers almost as victims of the practical barriers, and rewarded fathers for their desire to be involved, irrespective of their level of involvement. This construction is especially problematic in relation to the positioning of mothers as gatekeepers. This positioning works to hold mothers responsible for fathers' lack of involvement, whilst fathers are praised for their purportedly unrealised desires to be more involved in the care of their children.

Due to the concern for gender equality and work-family balance in contemporary society, policymakers in Western and Nordic countries have directed their efforts toward increasing levels of father involvement (Dermott, 2008). However, the current study demonstrates that support for primary caregiving fathers and increased father involvement continues to be tempered by an investment in perpetuating hegemonic accounts of masculinity. That is not to suggest that practical constraints identified as barriers to greater father involvement should not be recognised as legitimate barriers. However, there is an important distinction between the media simply reproducing these constraints as justification for current fathering practices, and utilising these constraints to argue for social change and policy revisions that promote equal access to caregiving. For example, the analysis identified how the news stories drew on the gender pay gap to explain why many Australian men remain the primary financial provider. However, the stories did not then utilise this example to push for social or structural changes.

Despite the increasing number of men becoming primary caregivers, the gendered division of carework and housework in Australian families remains unequal, and policymakers are seeking to resolve this through structural and policy changes (Stevens, 2015). There are multiple schemes in Australia to encourage father involvement, such as the Dad and Partner Payment (DaPP) (Stevens, 2015). However, despite these structural changes, social policies and gendered assumptions continue to disincentivise fathers and reproduce the notion that fathers are not primary caregivers, and the current study demonstrates how this is perpetuated via the news media. Greater social and academic discourse needs to be directed at critiquing and debating these gendered assumptions.

In conclusion, the study reported here highlights the need to pay ongoing critical attention to discourses that endorse and promote primary caregiving for fathers. Whilst appearing to support and encourage such fathers, the analysis reported in this paper demonstrates the ability of the news media to endorse involved fathering in theory, whilst reproducing and maintaining hegemonic masculinity and inegalitarian models of fathering. These findings support previous research that demonstrate how this type of accounting arguably upholds patriarchal privilege (Edley & Wetherell, 1999; Wetherell, Stiven & Potter, 1987), whilst exploring some of their specific iterations in the Australian context. Overall, the findings reported here have broader implications for understanding contemporary social norms and ideals, especially the claim that fatherhood is evolving and the claim that a "caring masculinity" is challenging inegalitarian norms of fathering, with the findings suggesting that as much as there is change, much still remains the same (Hunter, Riggs & Augoustinos, 2017).

Statement of authorship

Title of Paper	News media constructions of primary caregiving fathers and masculinity: A membership categorisation analysis
Publication Status	☐ Published ☐ Accepted for Publication ☑ Submitted for Publication ☐ Unpublished and Unsubmitted work written in manuscript style
Publication Details	Hunter, S. C., Augoustinos, M. & Riggs, D. W. (Under review). News media constructions of primary caregiving fathers and masculinity: A membership categorisation analysis. *Journal of Gender Studies.*

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Name of Principal Author (Candidate)	Sarah Clare Hunter
Contribution to the Paper	Performed analysis on all samples, interpreted data, wrote manuscript and acted as corresponding author.
Overall percentage	85%
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: 29/11/2017

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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Chapter 5: Paper 4

News media constructions of primary caregiving fathers and masculinity: A membership categorisation analysis

Increasing cultural and academic attention is being paid to fathers who assume the primary caregiving role. This attention stems from interest into whether contemporary fatherhood and masculinity are evolving and shifting away from hegemonic models. The study reported in this paper utilises a membership categorisation analysis to explore how this relatively new category – primary caregiving father – is discursively constructed and deployed in 176 Australian newsprint media articles. The analysis identified the fluid and flexible categorisation of primary caregiving fathers. It found that these fathers could not claim membership to the category of normative fathers. However, these category boundaries can be reworked, as well, that category-tied predicates of choice and stoicism allow primary caregiving fathers to be categorised within hegemonic masculinity. Overall, this paper concludes that whilst contemporary fathering is shifting away from rigid definitions of fathers as distant, financial providers, the extent to which a new and nurturing masculinity has replaced this, remains unclear.

Introduction

The last two decades have seen increasing interest in shifting understandings and practices of fatherhood (Doucet & Merla, 2007; Duckworth & Buzzanell, 2009; Latshaw & Hale, 2015; Rochlen, Suizzo, McKelley & Scaringi, 2008). In particular, there has been a focus on the increase in fathers who assume a primary caregiving role (Chesley, 2011). This interest largely stems from the co-construction and interdependence of fathering and masculinity. Traditional definitions of fathers as the distant and financial provider were closely connected to dominant images of hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 2003). However, assuming the primary caregiving role typically means stepping away from the financial provider role, therefore the concept of hegemonic masculinity cannot entirely capture the experiences of these fathers. The increasing number of fathers taking on the primary caregiving role arguably contribute to and reflect changing ideas of masculinities. As a result, concepts such as a "caring masculinity" are emerging to account for how fathers now explore a more nurturing and caregiving aspect of their fathering identity (Ammari & Schoenebeck, 2015; Elliott, 2015).

This idea of a "new" father has been extensively discussed in the literature, and there is considerable emphasis on the benefits of a father who is attentive, caring and involved (Henwood & Procter, 2003). However, recent work has suggested that the ideas surrounding this form of caring masculinity may not be that distinct from hegemonic masculinity, but rather demonstrates a broadening of hegemonic masculinity, with primary caregiving fathers exemplifying this (Hunter, Riggs & Augoustinos, 2017). As a result, it would appear that contemporary images of fathering are fragmented and uncertain (Johansson & Andreasson, 2017). Therefore, research has focused on exploring the lives and experiences of primary caregiving fathers, and more specifically, why men take on the caregiving role, reactions and attitudes toward them and strategies they utilise in the face of adversity (e.g., Burkstrand-

Reid, 2012; Chesley, 2011; Doucet & Merla, 2007; Dunn, Rochlen & O'Brien, 2013; Fischer & Anderson, 2012; Latshaw, 2011; Latshaw & Hale, 2015; Rochlen, McKelley, Suizzo & Scaringi, 2008; Rochlen, Suizzo, McKelley & Scaringi, 2008).

While it can be argued that there has been a deconstruction of fatherhood, with notions of a distant, provider role being left behind, there is no reliable or consistent clear alternative. This is further illuminated by researchers who have been critical of whether shifting ideas and expectations align with the actual conduct of contemporary fathers (LaRossa et al., 1991; Wall & Arnold, 2007).

As such, it is important to further explore contemporary fatherhood, however we need to move beyond merely acknowledging fathers increasing involvement, as it is too simplistic to suggest more time is equivalent to better fathering (Dermott, 2008; Johansson & Andreasson, 2017). It is critical to explore the dominant discourses which circulate in relation to contemporary fatherhood and notions of good fathering. Popular discourses and images of what it means to be a father create pressures and expectations that men must navigate (Lupton & Barclay, 1997). It is important then, for research to turn to the sites in which discourses of fathering are constructed and reproduced, and to consider the implications of such discourses. One contemporary site in which constructions and representations of primary caregiving fathers are prominent is in the newsprint media.

Constructions and representations of primary caregiving fathers in the media

The continuing lack of fatherhood presence (comparative to motherhood) within the media reinforces the long standing normative notion that fathers are secondary, and sometimes, not relevant, to parenting (Schmitz, 2016). As previously mentioned, traditional images and understandings of fatherhood have been long informed by hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 1987; 2003). Whilst a contested concept, hegemonic masculinity can be understood as the

most honoured or desired form of masculinity, and drives understandings of what it means to be a man (Connell, 2003). This form of masculinity dominates over and subordinates all other styles of not only masculine expression, but also expressions of femininity (Connell, 1987). This hegemonic ideal traditionally embodies qualities such as being strong, successful, unemotional, distant, a financial provider, and in control (Connell, 2003). Despite the utility of hegemonic masculinity to the study of fathering, it does not entirely capture the experiences of primary caregiving fathers. This contributes to the aforementioned claim that fatherhood and masculinity are evolving to allow fathers to explore and express a more nurturing side.

The significance of the media, is that changes in everyday constructions of masculinity and fatherhood have parallels to changing images of fatherhood within the media, and vice versa (Johansson & Andreasson, 2017). The media constitutes a crucial source of information on fatherhood, and exerts a powerful influence on public understandings of, and responses to, contemporary parenting practices (Lupton & Barclay, 1997). The media circulates regulatory notions of what is appropriate, expected, and normal with regard to fatherhood, and this influences how individuals construct and negotiate their identities (Blackman & Walkerdine, 2001). Despite the media's claims to objectively report on world events, it should more properly be understood as a social construction, commonly drawing upon existing norms and available discourses (Eldridge, 1993). Despite this, limited research has sought to explore how the media constructs primary caregiving fathers, and whether the media endorses a more nurturing masculinity and caregiving father.

Focusing broadly on contemporary fathering, Wall and Arnold (2007) analysed a Canadian newspaper series that ran from September 1999 to June 2000 to determine whether the media endorses nurturing and involved fatherhood. Their analysis identified how fathers are presented as secondary parents who are there to support mothers. Fathers' parental

responsibilities were depicted as coming after their employment responsibilities and their caregiving and emotional involvement was not expected or considered necessary.

Specific to primary caregiving fathers, Winter and Pauwels (2006) conducted an analysis on 85 newspaper articles published during 2004 in a variety of countries to explore the media discourses surrounding these fathers. They identified evidence of some discriminatory language as well as how this language limits men in their ability to identify solely as a primary carer, as it is expected that they have a secondary or additional identity/role. They argued that the news articles positioned fathers' caregiving identity within the realms of hegemonic masculinity.

Beyond just the language used to describe these fathers, Liong (2015) analysed the constructions and representations of primary caregiving fathers within Hong Kong newspapers. It was identified that middle-to-upper class fathers were constructed as remaining tied to the public sphere. This construction is significant, as it position these fathers as aspiring to return to paid work, demonstrating that they are continuing to invest in their provider role, thus demonstrating hegemonic masculinity. The media did not critically evaluate or challenge fathers for this investment, but rather praised them for their sacrifice of giving up their economic power and careers.

Another study examined not only the constructions and representations of primary caregiving fathers in Australian television media, but also how primary caregiving fathers themselves, negotiate these constructions (Stevens, 2015). In this study, it was identified that primary caregiving is not framed as a choice for fathers, but rather results from circumstances. Overall, the media highlighted primary caregiving fathers' masculine attributes by framing involved fathering as an addition to paid work (Stevens, 2015). The fathers included in this study struggled to identify with the assumption that fathers do not choose to be primary caregivers. However, whilst these fathers took issue with this

construction, all recognised that financial and economic factors were behind their decision to take on the primary caregiving role. Overall, this study demonstrates that the ideal image of a contemporary father in Australia is one who is a financial provider as well as an involved father (Stevens, 2015).

A membership categorisation analysis

The media clearly serves as a crucial site to explore and examine understandings of contemporary fatherhood. However, despite the insights on primary caregiving fathers provided by the previously outlined studies, very little is known about how these fathers are categorised. Within the academic literature, and society more generally, it is assumed primary caregiving fathers are distinct from working fathers or fathers who assume a more traditionally masculine role. However, such assumptions should not be made, rather, particular identities and their associated characteristics only become relevant if they are built up in discourse and interaction (Schegloff, 1997). Therefore, research should focus on whether (and how) the category of primary caregiving father is built up and oriented to, within discourse and interaction.

This idea is the focus of membership categorisation analysis (MCA) (Sacks, 1992). As categories store significant culturally rich common-sense knowledge, if a person is categorised in a particular way, it is presumed they embody the attributes and predicates related to that category (Schegloff, 2007). However, if a person contravenes these expectations, they may be seen as a "different" or "defective" category member, and re-categorised accordingly (Schegloff, 2007). It has been argued that utilising MCA and focusing on the ways in which categories are built up and deployed is useful for examining the everyday reproduction of gender and reinforcement of gender normativity (Stokoe, 2004).

Whilst no research has utilised MCA to explore primary caregiving fathers, research

has demonstrated the utility of MCA in exploring masculinities. For example, Hall and Gough (2011) explored constructions of "metrosexuality" within a 2007 men's lifestyle magazine article and its associated readers' responses. Through utilising MCA their analysis identified how common-sense knowledge relating to gendered identities is drawn upon when talking about new and emergent identities, such as "metrosexual". Hall and Gough (2011) argued that their analysis identified how contemporary society still relies on the heteronormative assumption that there are two sexes with distinct gendered attributes and associated activities. Therefore, it is complex and difficult for new and other membership categories to emerge that encompass the attributes and activities commonly associated with the opposite sex.

In a similar study, Hall, Gough and Seymour-Smith (2012) explored men's accounts of makeup use. Through drawing on MCA they identified how these men reframed their non-normative behaviour and inoculated themselves against potential categorisations of being "gay". Both of these studies on metrosexuality argued that traditional or hegemonic masculinity are not in decline or at threat of being destabilised, but rather, are reworked to suit contemporary society (Hall & Gough, 2011; Hall, Gough & Seymour-Smith, 2012). These findings are particularly significant in the examination of primary caregiving fathers, given it is an emerging membership category that deviates from traditional masculinity and encompasses traditionally feminine activities.

What is missing from the literature, then, is an account of how primary caregiving fathers are positioned in relation to categorisations of what is considered normative within contemporary society. MCA can provide us insights into how primary caregiving fathers are categorised and how these categorisations are deployed in the media. In particular, it is the normative features of categories and the potential for re-categorisation that is of particular focus in this study. Therefore, this study is interested in deploying the tools of MCA to

analyse how news articles discuss and categorise primary caregiving fathers, thereby shaping specific understandings of fatherhood and the meanings/challenges of being a father in contemporary society.

Method

Data

The data used were identified from a comprehensive search of the Factiva database for Australian newspaper articles where discussions of primary caregiving fathers were explicitly taken up. Articles that only fleetingly mentioned them were excluded. Further, it was decided to exclude the search term “house husbands” due to the number of articles retrieved relating to the popular Australian television series “House Husbands” (see Bartholomaeus & Riggs, 2016). Such articles focused largely or exclusively on the actors, ratings, season renewals, etc. of this series, and were therefore not deemed relevant for this analysis.

A search was conducted of all Australian newspapers within the Factiva database. The following search terms were used: "stay-at-home dads", "stay at home dads", "stay-at-home fathers", "stay at home fathers", "caregiving dads", “caregiving fathers", "men who mother", “Mr. Mom”, and “Mr. Mum”. These search terms are the most commonly used terms as identified by the academic literature (i.e. those reviewed previously in this paper). The search was restricted to articles published over a 5 year period, between 1st January 2012 and 20th October 2016.

In total, 351 articles were found using these criteria. After excluding 101 articles due to being duplicates, and excluding articles that were not relevant, 176 articles remained for analysis.

Procedure

This analysis followed the five guiding principles of MCA provided by Stokoe (2012). These principles include collecting the data, building collections of categories and category descriptions, locating the sequential position of each category, analysis of the action orientation of each category, and finally, a focus on how each category is responded to, built up or resisted (Stokoe, 2012).

Through this analytic process we identified a dominant and recurring representation/construction across all 176 articles. This was related to the non-normative status of caregiving fathers, suggesting that primary caregiving fathers were "unusual", "weird", "and unacceptable". In the examples analysed below, the news articles worked up, orientated to, and managed their descriptions of primary caregiving fathers according to traditional gendered norms and expectations of contemporary fathering.

Analysis

The analysis is organised into three sections. The first section relates to how the news articles draw on a contrast between the categories primary caregiving fathers and normative fathers. The second section relates to how the news articles discursively work to defend primary caregiving fathers' threatened masculinity. Finally, the third section focuses on how the news articles describe stipulations of choice and stoicism that influence how primary caregiving fathers are categorised.

Normative fathers versus primary caregiving fathers

This section of analysis examines the discursive work involved in categorising what is considered normative for fathers, and specifically whether primary caregiving fathers can claim membership to that category. The extracts below demonstrate how the news articles

establish the categories normative fathers and primary caregiving fathers as distinct and contrasting categories.

Extract 1

"*Daddy Issues"* – Herald Sun (05/09/2015)

Stay-at-home dads and blokes who juggle nappy changes or school pick-ups with a day at the office

Extract 2

"*The Father of All Dilemmas"* – Daily Telegraph (01/03/2014)

It's good for the kids but is it good for the dads? Without access to the social resources mums take for granted, stay-at-home fathers quickly start to feel isolated. They're the Aussie blokes downing tools to be stay-at-home dads while their other halves earn a wage, but that doesn't mean they don't want to get out every now and then.

The first thing to notice in these two extracts is the use of the category "blokes". This is a significant category to draw on, as it evokes connotations of traditional and hegemonic masculinity. "Bloke" is a common colloquial term used in contemporary Australian society to describe a male who is considered normatively masculine. It is not uncommon for it to be considered a term of endearment or acceptance. Therefore, this immediately implies that "bloke" is a normative masculine category.

It is significant, then, that "stay-at-home dad/father" (primary caregiving fathers) is constructed as a different category. This sets up a paired contrast based on masculinity. In

particular, Extract 1 suggests that fathers who remove themselves completely from paid work are categorised as "stay-at-home dads", whereas fathers who remain tied to paid work are categorised as "blokes". This is significant, as it offers up an account that reinforces the idea that primary caregiving fathers depart from normative expectations of masculinity. Therefore, the extract implies that "stay-at-home dads" and "blokes" are different and contrasting categories. The implication of the categories used in these descriptions is that fathers who take on caregiving full time are departing from the norm, and those who take on caregiving but continue paid employment remain within the norms of hegemonic masculinity.

Also drawing on these two categories of fathers, Extract 2 discusses "stay-at-home dads" and "blokes". However, these categories are drawn on in a slightly different way. This extract suggests that fathers who take on the primary caregiving role were previously members of the category "bloke". However, through taking on the primary caregiving role, they no longer belong in that category and are now recategorised as "stay-at-home dads". Through the descriptions provided in both extracts, it becomes clear that fathers who take on the primary caregiving role are distinct from men who occupy a place within hegemonic masculinity.

The articles further draw a distinction between primary caregiving fathers and normative fathers. One particular article was titled *Stay-at-Home Dad Not One of the Guys* (The Gold Coast Bulletin – 13/07/2013). This title makes a clear claim that primary caregiving fathers do not belong to the category membership of normative fathers. Extract 3, taken from the same article, demonstrates this further.

Extract 3

Stay-at-Home Dad Not One of The Guys – The Gold Coast Bulletin (13/07/2013)

My only complaint is that I am now being treated differently

by the males in our couples group. They stop talking when I walk into the room and often make jokes about my new role. At first I was hurt and embarrassed, but I have learned to throw off their taunts. I feel they have lost respect for me and see me as a different person. I receive the opposite behaviour from our female friends who treat me like ``one of the girls'', constantly praising me for the time I spend with my children. How do I deal with this situation? RUTH: Maybe your friends feel threatened by the attention and praise you are receiving from their wives…. I also suggest you broaden your horizons and make friends with other stay-at-home dads. I believe there is a small group on the Coast called ``dads n bubs''. It is on the ``Meet-up'' site on the Gold Coast.

Extract 3 is an example of a father discussing his role as the primary caregiver. Both descriptions of being "treated differently" and the statement that "they [male friends] have lost respect for me and see me as a different person" demonstrate how primary caregiving fathers are not categorised as normative fathers, and thus, by implication, lose their category membership to hegemonic masculinity. Further, it is significant that this father describes how his female friends treat him "like one of the girls". This emphasises how primary caregiving fathers not only transgress the category of normative fathers, but that they are no longer considered members of the category men and rather can now be considered a member of the category female.

It is interesting to note how in Extract 3 it is suggested that other males may feel threatened by the attention and praise that primary caregiving fathers receive, suggesting a

challenge to traditional masculinity. This firstly demonstrates how primary caregiving fathers are potentially held accountable and are punished by other men for departing from norms of hegemonic masculinity. However, it also suggests a threatened or wounded masculinity by these men who make a claim to the category membership as a normative male (Merla, 2008).

Overall, Extract 3 makes clear that caregiving fathers do not belong to the category of normative fathers. Therefore, they are categorised as distinct from normative men and hegemonic masculinity, and thus are encouraged to create relationships with other members of their category "stay-at-home dads".

Defending a threatened masculinity

The previous section of analysis examined how primary caregiving fathers are categorised as outside the realms of hegemonic masculinity. The categorisation work achieved in the extracts above suggests that the category-bound activities of primary caregiving fathers are connected to femininity, which for men, is commonly regarded as "different" or "deviant" (Merla, 2008). However, this section of analysis makes clear that the news articles defend this threatened masculinity by reconfiguring the category boundaries of what constitutes normative, in order for primary caregiving fathers to reclaim membership to hegemonic masculinity.

The news articles accomplish this by attempting a re-alignment with masculinity. This is achieved through negatively positioning the category of past fathers in contrast with contemporary fathers. This category work highlights the "flexibility of categories" (Speer, 2005, pp. 119-120). In other words, the category label "primary caregiving father", which was positioned in the previous section as a marginalised masculinity, is in the process of being reclaimed or praised.

Extract 4

"*Daddy Issues"* – Herald Sun (05/09/2015)

The modern father isn't the guy who comes home from work and plonks himself in front of the TV any more. On the eve of Father's Day, MEGAN MILLER speaks to some hands-on dads.

Extract 5

"*Domesticated Dads Waive Tradition"* – Townsville Bulletin (15/09/2012)

These days people are far more likely to seek partners with complex and varied qualities rather than the largely stereotypical and gendered prerequisites of the past. Research has found most of the stay-at-home fathers are very secure, emotionally strong, say they're quite happy and have successfully divorced their self-concept from the size of their pay cheque and the size of their ego.

Both Extracts 4 and 5 position fathers who engage in any level of involvement in caregiving as more masculine than fathers who do not engage in caregiving at all. "Modern father", "hands-on dads" and "stay-at-home fathers" from Extracts 4 and 5 are contrasted with the category of fathers who engage in full-time paid work and do very little in the way of caregiving or domestic tasks. This category of an uninvolved father is constructed negatively, asserting that primary caregiving fathers are more assured, effective and masculine.

Specifically, Extract 4 and 5 position the long-held expectation for fathers to be financial providers as no longer a desirable norm. The articles construct and reinforce how there has been a shift in expectations, where fathers are now required to be more involved in

household activities. This works to not only account for primary caregiving fathers, but also makes uninvolved fathers morally accountable for their continued lack of involvement and alignment with paid work and traditional masculine norms.

This paired contrast serves to re-masculinise primary caregiving fathers as they are positioned as though they are "better" than uninvolved fathers of the past. The articles work up accounts of the many different ways fathers are doing more, and how they are doing better, than fathers of the past. The following extract furthers this by emphasising how traditional fathering is outdated.

Extract 6

"Manning up For Role Change" – Wentworth Courier (28/09/2016)

THERE was a time when it would have seemed odd for a husband to stay at home with the children when the wife went to work. But Jonathon Smith, of Clovelly, said he was part of a growing number of stay-at-home-dads embracing the role of the primary carer.

Extract 6 demonstrates an acknowledgment of primary caregiving for fathers as a departure from traditionally normative boundaries of masculinity. However, this traditional model is framed as no longer relevant in contemporary society. This allows us to see how the emergence and "growing number" of fathers who make up the category of primary caregiving father can be used to hold more traditional and uninvolved categories of fathers as morally accountable for not succumbing to social change. The extract demonstrates the discursive work to position involved fathering as the new norm for fathers. This can be further seen in Extract 7.

Extract 7

"*Daddy Issues"* – Herald Sun (05/09/2015)

People who think parenting is women's work are selfish and are missing the point of a family unit as a whole," he says. "Or perhaps they're very, very traditional and have been brought up seeing that culture. It's unproductive to continue that line of thinking, though.

Extract 7 further works to establish primary caregiving fathers as the new norm. Fathers who adhere to these involved expectations are categorised as more masculine than those who remain tied to past expectations. In particular, this extract demonstrates how this father is engaged in the work of identity and stake management. He critiques uninvolved fathering in order to legitimate his own identity as a primary caregiver. This demonstrates how primary caregiving fathers need to defend their own identity in the face of a threatened masculinity. This extract utilises reported speech as a rhetorical device to evidence claims that position fathers who adhere to traditional norms negatively. These fathers are positioned as either "selfish", "missing the point", and "very, very traditional", which implies they do not understand and are stuck in the past. This demonstrates the difficulties associated in transgressing traditional norms and expectations and the perceived need to normalise and legitimise these activities.

Overall, this section of analysis has identified that primary caregiving fathers face a threatened masculinity. However, the analysis also identifies how these fathers discursively defend this threatened masculinity and are accordingly recategorised within the boundaries of hegemonic masculine. This not only demonstrates the complexity of categorising

contemporary fathering practices, but also, how delicate and fluid hegemonic masculine boundaries can be.

Choice and stoicism as category-tied predicates

So far, the analysis has demonstrated the complex and potentially fluid categorisation of fathers who take on the primary caregiving role. In the first section, it was identified they were categorised as outside boundaries of hegemonic masculinity, whereas in the second section they were categorised as within boundaries of contemporary hegemonic masculinity. This final section of the analysis, however, demonstrates how there are stipulations that influence how primary caregiving fathers are categorised. The news articles define some category predicates associated with primary caregiving fathers that categorise them as normative. In other words, if fathers wish to take on the primary caregiving role but want to remain within the boundaries of hegemonic masculinity, they can demonstrate the following predicates – choice and stoicism. The following extracts demonstrate accounts of how and why fathers take on the primary caregiving role.

Extract 8

"Let's Now Sing Mothers' Praises" – Illawarra Mercury (21/03/2015)

When I was laid off nearly two years ago, my awesome wife leapt to the fore and saved the family from an uncertain future. Already running her own copywriting business, she picked up another, full-time gig just two weeks after I lost mine.

Extract 9

"Dads Take Charge of The Home Front" – The Sun Herald (29/03/2015)

With wife Sarah a high-level marketing consultant who travelled a lot for work, it made economic and professional sense that Dennis, an artist, would give up his job to be at home once she returned to work after six months' maternity leave

Extracts 8 and 9 demonstrate how the news articles invoke category-bound predicates tied to caregiving fathers to facilitate the readers' orientation to what is perceived as normative. Specifically, Extract 8 describes a father who took on the caregiving role due to being "laid off" from work. This type of claim (whilst not the only factor) is widely evident in research on the decisions of primary caregiving fathers (Burkstrand-Reid, 2012; Merla, 2008; Rochlen, McKelley & Whittaker, 2010; Russell, 1987). The decision is framed as a result of circumstances, implying that this father would not choose to take on the primary caregiving role if he could retain his position within paid employment. In this account the author's wife is described as coming to the "fore" when she became the primary financial provider, and thus emphasises how financial provision is viewed as superior, and the caregiving role as secondary.

In contrast, Extract 9 describes a father who chose to take on the primary caregiving role; however the decision is constructed as logical, practical and rational (i.e. financial and economic reasons) rather than a decision motivated by emotional or personal interest. These accounts depict fathers as taking on this role only when paid employment is not an option, or when their partner's paid employment is considered superior.

In both of these accounts, the category predicate of fathers not choosing the role discursively works to shield primary caregiving fathers from potentially being associated

with femininity (as they have taken on a traditionally feminine role). It allows primary caregiving fathers to be categorised as normative, as they are positioned as adhering to hegemonic masculine norms and expectations by considering and valuing paid employment, despite taking on the primary caregiving role. Significantly, there were no instances in the news articles depicting fathers as desiring to be a caregiver. Extract 10 provides further evidence of primary caregiving fathers being categorised as normative due to framing the decision as not based on choice, but on it "being a good financial decision".

Extract 10

"Breaking Down The Pink-Collar Barriers at Work And Home" – Sun Herald (16/08/2015)

When Lewis was six-months-old, we decided that I'd become the stay-at-home parent. Tania's a physiotherapist with a PhD who loves her career. I didn't have a lot invested in mine, so basically it came down to what was going to make us happiest, and ended up being a good financial decision. I get my satisfaction now from writing, which I can do from home. This way has worked for us.

Extract 10 reinforces the importance of economic considerations when becoming a primary caregiver. The decision is framed as not focused on the importance of caregiving, but rather the importance of who is able or willing to step away from paid employment. The desire or interest in being a primary caregiver does not appear to be considered a factor in the decision making process. Also notable in this extract is the use of "we" when referencing who made the decision. What is reinforced here is that fathers themselves are not making the decision to

be a primary caregiving alone, but a collaborative one negotiated by both partners. The implication is that it is a democratic decision making process between heterosexual partners, based primarily on professional and financial considerations. It is significant to note that in the three previous extracts, the partners are described as successful professional women. This again highlights the work that goes into justifying the decision as pragmatic, where fathers only assume the role when their partner's role is considered superior.

There was no instance where it was presented as the sole choice of a father. This is a significant contrast to mothers who are often not required to explain or account for why they are primary caregivers, as it is commonly assumed they simply desire to do it. This extract, then, reinforces that it is normative for fathers to justify their decision when it comes to taking on primary caregiving. This construction ensures that fathers are not positioned as feminine, as they do not desire to take on this traditionally feminine role. Rather, their masculinity remains intact as their decision to become a primary caregiver is made through a masculine lens, that is, they approach the decision pragmatically and rationally.

Another normative primary caregiving father predicate relates to notions of stoicism. The news articles position these fathers as though they are taking on the caregiving role out of a sense of responsibility as men, to step up, and do the right thing. This predicate relates to the previous predicate of choice, in that it appeals to the normative notion that masculine men do not do things out of choice, but rather, they do what is considered the right thing or sometimes, the hard thing, in order to prove their masculinity. Thus, news articles presented accounts from fathers who do not choose the primary caregiving role, and who subsequently engage in identity work that shores them up as stoic for taking on this role. This notion of fathers as stoic for taking on the primary caregiving role is demonstrated in Extract 11.

Extract 11

"*Daddy Issues"* – Herald Sun (05/09/2015)

Middle Park dad Shaun Florence is a full-time project manager at building firm Construction Engineering Australia. He works up to 55 hours a week but it simply isn't an option for him to not shoulder the load with wife Jodie Artis, who runs her own public relations company Progressive PR & Publicity

As we can see in Extract 11, this father has to be involved in caregiving as he does not have a choice. It is not something he is choosing to do, but rather, something he is positioned as having to do. Further, there is significance in the way this extract depicts the father as having to "shoulder the load". This metaphor works to construct the father as picking up the "heavy" work, and the implication is that, as a man, it is his duty to do so. The deployment of this metaphor thus works to masculinise his identity, which again discursively shields this father from being positioned as choosing to care for his children. Drawing on these masculine descriptions of primary caregiving fathers was prominent across all of the articles. One was even titled *"Manning up for role change"* (Wentworth Courier – 28/09/2016). The following extracts demonstrate the specifics of what makes primary caregiving fathers stoic.

Extract 12

"Education, Ambition Put Women in Breadwinner's Role as Gen Y Questions Traditional Family Structure" – The Sunday Times (07/09/2014)

IN thousands of homes across WA, there's a quiet revolution gaining pace. On its frontline are the fathers bold and brave enough to buck centuries of entrenched stereotypes to

stay at home and look after their children. By their side are the wives and partners whose richer pay packets and greater ambition anoint them as family breadwinners.

Extract 13

"Education, Ambition Put Women in Breadwinner's Role as Gen Y Questions Traditional Family Structure" – The Sunday Times (07/09/2014)

Mr Segal established a playgroup in Woodvale six years ago for stay-at-home dads to chat with like-minded souls. Earlier this year he opened a second one in Cockburn. But moving into the full-time role of being a stay-at-home dad is still a "very brave decision". "These guys often cop it about not having a real job. They have to fight for acceptance from others sometimes," he said.

Focusing more specifically on the constructions of stoicism, we can see in Extracts 12 and 13, how primary caregiving fathers are described in hegemonic masculine ways. Extract 12 describes primary caregiving fathers as "bold and "brave". Given caregiving has long been associated with femininity, the potential unease for men is dealt with by positioning this traditionally feminine role as part of a masculine script. In other words, linking this feminine role to conventional masculine behaviours and attributes. This is achieved by describing the increase in primary caregiving fathers with traditional war metaphors such as; these fathers are on the "frontline", arguably the most dangerous, heroic and brave position. Extract 13 describes taking on the primary caregiving role as a "very brave decision", thus suggesting that these fathers receive negative backlash and have to "fight" to prove themselves. Indeed,

these accounts position primary caregiving fathers as potentially more masculine than fathers who adhere to traditional models of fathering. This can be further seen in Extract 14.

Extract 14

"Domesticated Dads Waive Tradition" – Townsville Bulletin (15/09/2012)

Mr Dalton said he regularly had to explain to working fathers that being a stay-at-home father was not as easy as they believed. ``Many men think staying at home with the children allows you to just sit around watching TV, go to the pub, play golf or fish all day; that couldn't be further from the truth,''' he said.

Extract 14 demonstrates how traditional or "working" fathers are positioned as uninformed and "clueless". This extract utilises reported speech from a primary caregiving father who draws on a role reversal to explain that working fathers are taking the easy option, and it is in fact, primary caregiving fathers, who take on the hard work. Overall, this section demonstrates how traits of hegemonic masculinity are traded on in order to normalise a departure from hegemonic masculinity, which is a previously documented form of masculine identity negotiation (Wetherell & Edley, 1999).

What this section of analysis makes evident, is that not all primary caregiving fathers are categorised equally. There are category-tied predicates of choice and stoicism invoked for primary caregiving fathers in order for them to be categorised within the bounds of hegemonic masculinity. This section demonstrates that primary caregiving fathers who either had no choice, or stoically took on this unconventional role, can be categorised as adhering to hegemonic masculinity.

Conclusion

This paper has used the principles of MCA in order to explore how primary caregiving fathers are categorised and positioned in contemporary Australian newsprint media. Overall, it can be argued that the categorisation of primary caregiving fathers is fluid and flexible. The first section of analysis examined how primary caregiving fathers cannot claim membership to the category of normative fathers. This is due to them transgressing traditional and hegemonic models of masculinity relating to financial provision. However, the second section of analysis identified how this threatened masculinity can be defended, and the category boundaries of what constitutes normative for contemporary fathers can be reconfigured. Specifically, drawing on a paired contrast based on their level of involvement with their children, primary caregiving fathers are re-categorised as hegemonic due to adhering to contemporary expectations of involvement in comparison to fathers of the past who remained detached and uninvolved.

These two sections of analysis demonstrated the complex and potentially fluid categorisation of primary caregiving fathers. The final section of analysis explored how the category-tied predicates of masculinity - choice and stoicism - were drawn upon to claim membership to the category "normative father". In other words, if fathers who assume the primary caregiving role can demonstrate that they take on this role not out of choice, but rather that they make a stoic and "manly" decision to "step up" and take on this role, they are considered as operating within the boundaries of normative masculinity.

These findings are significant, as they demonstrate how fatherhood continues to be a contested site of competing societal discourses (Hunter, Riggs & Augoustinos, 2017; Lupton & Barclay, 1997; Merla, 2008; Stevens, 2015). Contemporary images of fathering continue to remain unclear and scattered (Johansson & Andreasson, 2017). This study demonstrates how

primary caregiving fathers are categorised as simultaneously normative and as breaking away from norms. Therefore, future research should further focus on utilising MCA in order to explore how contemporary fathers are categorised in everyday informal and formal discourse. This analytic approach provides insight into what and who is categorised as meeting normative expectations.

Overall, it is not an easy endeavour to understand or explain why contemporary men are increasingly involved in caregiving. There is a complex combination of factors relating to class, status, values and political views that were not captured in this study. What this study does contribute to though, is the argument that fathers are encouraged and praised for their contribution and participation in traditional feminine roles (Liong, 2015). It is significant that the media and popular culture praise involved fathering, as this promotes and encourages increasing involvement. However, we need to be critical and cautious of such praise, as it is nonetheless the case that women in heterosexual relationships continue to remain responsible for the largest proportion of house and carework (Latshaw & Hale, 2015).

The current study challenges how we think about hegemonic masculinity. This traditional model of masculinity primarily positioned fathers as financial providers, in control and distant (Connell, 2003). It is clear that contemporary images and practices of fatherhood are breaking away from this rigid and hegemonic definition. However, the extent to which a new masculinity has replaced this, remains in question.

Chapter 6: Discussion

Overview

Throughout this thesis constructions and representations of primary caregiving fathers have been examined. Specifically, analyses of empirical data (parenting texts and newsprint media) were presented, investigating the ways in which discourse is used to negotiate and position fathers within the traditionally feminine role of primary caregiving. This analysis of discourse achieved the aim of examining the constructions of primary caregiving fathers' masculinities.

Chapter 1 outlined the relevant background that has informed this thesis. Firstly, Chapter 1 examined the empirical literature on primary caregiving fathers. This included a discussion of why a growing number of men are taking on the primary caregiving role, the various reactions and attitudes they face, and the various compensatory strategies they deploy in light of these reactions and attitudes.

Following this, Chapter 1 outlined the theoretical approach and theoretical considerations that have informed this thesis. This firstly involved a discussion surrounding fathering and mothering, and specifically, whether primary caregiving fathers "become" mothers. Secondly, this chapter provided a discussion surrounding terminology and the implications of how we label the population of fathers who provide primary care. And finally, the chapter provided an in-depth discussion of social constructionism, and how this has informed the basis of the thesis.

Chapter 1 went on to outline the significance of examining constructions and representations of fathering, especially in relation to primary caregiving fathers. This chapter examined the relevant literature that has explored primary caregiving fathers in parenting

texts and newsprint media.

The final focus of Chapter 1 was on the analytic approach adopted in this thesis. This involved an in-depth discussion of the utility of discourse analysis, and then a discussion of the three particular approaches used within each analytic chapter – critical psychology (Gough & McFadden, 2001), ideological dilemmas (Billig et al., 1988), and membership categorisation analysis (Sacks, 1972a; 1972b; 1992), respectively.

Following the background covered in Chapter 1, the focus of Chapter 2 was dedicated to an in-depth exploration of the literature on primary caregiving fathers and masculinities. This chapter, published as a theoretical paper in *Social and Personality Psychology Compass*, focused on the literature that describes how primary caregiving fathers navigate the norms of a traditional, provider father and a new and involved father. In this chapter, it was concluded that rather than traditional models of fathering being replaced by new models, both models continue to exist alongside one another, and allow men to navigate hegemonic constructions of masculinity.

Given the background provided in Chapters 1 and 2, the analytic chapters in this thesis focused on the discursive strategies utilised by parenting texts and newsprint media to construct and position primary caregiving fathers in relation to norms of masculinity. In this conclusion, a summary of these analytic chapters (Chapters 3-5) will be provided, and the findings situated within the previous literature. Following these summaries, a discussion of what this thesis contributes and also what this thesis challenges will be provided. Specifically, this chapter will focus on what the findings presented in this thesis mean for understandings and conceptualisations of contemporary masculinities and fathering. Then a discussion on some potential limitations and considerations will be provided, leading into a discussion of future directions for research in this area.

Summary of analytic chapters

In addition to the paper outlined above that constitutes Chapter 2, three additional papers (either published or under review) are included in this thesis as the analytic chapters. Chapter 3 focused on a study that explored constructions of primary caregiving fathers within nine popular parenting texts. This paper, published in *Men and Masculinities,* utilised a discourse analysis informed by a critical psychological approach. Four interpretative repertoires were identified that outlined very specific ways in which it is deemed appropriate for fathers to take on the primary caregiving role. It was concluded that we need to take a critical approach to accounts that claim to encourage primary caregiving fathers, as they appear to simultaneously produce accounts of primary caregiving that promote fathering whilst fitting primary caregiving within norms of established hegemonic masculinities.

Chapter 4 focused on a study that explored the constructions of primary caregiving fathers within 176 Australian newsprint media articles. This paper, published in *Discourse, Context and Media,* utilised a discourse analysis in a way that focused on the socially constructed nature of fathering. Drawing on the work of Billig et al. (1988) this paper demonstrated how accounts of contemporary fathering are built upon ideological dilemmas, more specifically the principle/practice dichotomy identified by Wetherell, Stiven and Potter (1987) and Edley and Wetherell (1999). It was concluded that we need to be critical of accounts of contemporary fathering, given the ability of the news media to endorse involved fathering in theory, but at the same time emphasise the practical constraints that prevent this from becoming commonplace. Arguably, this principle/practice dichotomy contributes to reproducing and maintaining hegemonic masculinity and traditional models of fathering.

Chapter 5 presents a study which utilised Membership Categorisation Analysis (MCA) (Sacks, 1992) to explore the categorisation of primary caregiving fathers within 176 Australian newsprint media articles. This paper, currently under review in the *Journal of*

Gender Studies, argued that primary caregiving fathers are categorised as simultaneously within normative masculine boundaries and as breaking away from norms. The analytic leverage that MCA provides offered a unique insight into exploring what and who is categorised as meeting normative expectations of contemporary fathering.

Contributions and implications of this research

The previous section provided a brief overview of each paper presented in this thesis. Rather than discuss the findings from each paper and the associated implications in turn, this section will rather describe the findings and implications of these papers taken together. The analysis presented in each paper, whilst unique, do coalesce into an overall argument. Therefore, exploring this argument as one, and relating the papers back to the literature together, provide a less repetitive and more compelling conclusion.

First, the findings of this research will be related back to the theoretical considerations outlined in Chapters 1 and 2. These include fathers and masculinities, a social constructionist and discursive approach, and finally, fathering and mothering. Following this, the findings of the research will be related back to the empirical literature outlined in Chapter 1 focusing on reasons, reactions and attitudes, and compensatory actions. Finally, there will be a discussion regarding the overall limitations and recommendations of the present research, ending then with some concluding thoughts.

Theoretical considerations

Chapter 1 provided an overview of some theoretical considerations when it comes to exploring primary caregiving fathers. Unlike Chapter 1, which explored the empirical literature first, this chapter focuses firstly on the theoretical considerations. This is due to the fact that this thesis highlights the importance of these theoretical considerations when it

comes to understanding and examining primary caregiving fathers. Through understanding these theoretical considerations, it becomes easier to situate and understand the empirical literature. This section will therefore explore fathering and masculinities and fathering and mothering, and taking a social constructionist and discursive approach.

Fathers and masculinities

The analyses presented in each analytic paper (Chapters 3-5) undoubtedly highlight the significance of masculinities when it comes to primary caregiving fathers. The literature review in Chapter 2 provided an in-depth exploration of the research on masculinities and primary caregiving fathers. Overall, the paper in Chapter 2 concluded that primary caregiving fathers demonstrate that the norms and expectations of fathers are evolving, and fathers are no longer required to adhere strictly to traditional, provider expectations. In saying that, norms associated with hegemonic masculinity are not diminishing in importance in men's lives. Despite the introduction of notions such as "hybrid masculinities" (Bridges & Pascoe, 2014) and "pastiche hegemony" (Atkinson, 2011) that conceptualise the complex ways in which masculinities are changing and remain the same, this thesis identified how primary caregiving fathers are still seen to negotiate with and position themselves in relation to hegemonic masculinity as a taken for granted set of norms. The findings in this thesis contribute significantly to the literature and this argument provided in Chapter 2.

Research suggests that through taking on the primary caregiving role that fathers contribute to evolving norms and expectations (Grbich, 1992; 1995; 1997; Merla, 2008; Shirani, Henwood & Coltart, 2012). This idea was considered in Chapter 4, where it was demonstrated that the news articles analysed advocated for primary caregiving fathers. These news articles reinforced accounts of fathering that promoted involvement, and suggested that contemporary fatherhood has shifted from traditional models of fathering, and there are no

longer traditional gender roles in parenting. It is was also demonstrated in this chapter that by expressing interest in and identifying as a new and involved father, primary caregiving fathers distance themselves from the many characteristics of hegemonic masculinity that are viewed negatively (Finn & Henwood, 2009). Chapter 5 identified how the news articles categorised primary caregiving fathers as outside the realms of hegemonic masculinity.

However, in both of these analytic chapters (Chapters 4 and 5), it was shown that despite this, hegemonic masculinity continues to influence primary caregiving fathers. Previous research has demonstrated that fathers speak of how it takes a "bigger" and "stronger" father to be involved in caregiving (Henwood & Procter, 2003). Wetherell and Edley (1999) described this way of talking as the most effective way of approximating a hegemonic position in regards to masculinity. This claim of a new angle to hegemony was identified in Chapter 5. In this study, it was shown that the news articles positioned primary caregiving fathers as more masculine than working fathers or fathers who occupy a more traditional fathering role. Primary caregiving fathers were positioned as stoic, as though they are "stepping up", and doing what is difficult and hard.

Further, research has demonstrated that some fathers report that their masculinity is flexible enough to incorporate caregiving (Rochlen et al., 2008). However, fathers have simultaneously spoken of having interests and hobbies that are linked to traditional notions of masculinity, such as sport and being "handy men" (Rochlen et al., 2008). It would appear, then, that these fathers reject the traditional norms of masculinity that do not serve their identity, and hold onto the ones that do. This idea was identified in Chapter 3 where the parenting texts analysed described fathers providing care in a uniquely masculine way. Fathers were positioned as masculine despite breaking away from traditionally masculine expectations of fathering. For example, fathers were described using stereotypically masculine traits such as being "hands on", "physical" and "playful". These parenting texts

particularly praised fathers for their ability to bring masculine qualities to the caregiving role.

Another way in which primary caregiving fathers have been shown to demonstrate hegemonic masculinity is through investing in their "provider" identity through remaining tied to paid work, replacing paid work with unpaid work, or become involved in community work (Burkstrand-Reid, 2012; Doucet, 2004; Doucet & Merla, 2007; Grbich, 1992; Latshaw, 2011; Medved, 2016). Whilst not investing in their provider identity, Chapter 3 did identify a repertoire of men as financial providers. This repertoire described how primary caregiving fathers struggle to relinquish this identity. Primary caregiving was framed as a form of demotion, therefore highlighting fathers' "rightful" role as financial providers. This highlights how society continues to value paid work over unpaid/carework. In this instance, primary caregiving fathers were positioned as giving up their status and privilege, and by stepping away from the provider role, they simultaneously step away from their manhood.

It is clear then, that representations of contemporary fatherhood are evolving away from traditional, provider expectations. However, hegemonic masculinity continues to influence constructions of the fathering identity. Contemporary fatherhood involves simultaneous rejection and uptake of hegemonic masculinity, rather than a wholesale uptake of a caring masculinity (framed as entirely different to hegemonic accounts of masculinity and fathering).

It is however important to note that the actual experience of fathering is variable and unique, and the accounts presented in the parenting texts and news media articles analysed cannot describe or explain all fathers' experiences. In particular, Chapter 2 reviewed Liong's (2015) study that demonstrated how class plays a role in how the primary caregiving role is constructed for men. For example, working class fathers were seen as more likely to take on the role more permanently, and to incorporate caregiving into their identity, as opposed to middle-to-upper class fathers. This can be explained through recourse to the idea that middle-

to-upper class fathers are awarded significant power and status due to their socially valued paid work. Therefore, taking on a primary caregiving role results in giving up this power and status. Thus, middle-to-upper class primary caregiving fathers are constructed as though their primary caregiving role is temporary, and thus remain tied to their paid work. However, Chapter 2 also explored research that identified middle-to-upper class fathers who took on the caregiving role as they had "successfully" completed or demonstrated their prescribed role as financial provider (Brandth & Kvande, 1998; Doucet, 2004; Doucet & Merla, 2007; Ranson, 2001). This idea was demonstrated in Chapter 3, where the parenting texts analysed described primary caregiving fathers as those who have already established or "proven" their masculinity. These fathers, therefore, may feel they can afford to take risks with their masculinity due to their capital and status from being middle-to-upper class men.

Given these findings, it is likely that the parenting texts examined in Chapter 3 are primarily written for middle-to-upper class primary caregiving fathers, with the constructions and representations oriented to this assumed audience. Therefore the experiences of working class fathers cannot be corroborated or refuted. However, it is likely that any father who takes on primary caregiving will aim to rework masculinity in order to defend or normalise their role. The seemingly contradictory evidence on working class and middle-to-upper class fathers, then, is arguably not contradictory, but rather evidence of the malleability of hegemonic masculinity.

This notion of defending primary caregiving fathers' masculinity was identified in Chapters 3 and 4. Chapter 3 demonstrated how the representations of primary caregiving fathers in news articles contrasted contemporary fathers with fathers of the past. Through this, the news articles argued that contemporary fathers should be praised for their progress and involvement. This progress was framed as a form of competition with fathers of the past - with contemporary fathers wanting to do more and be more than their own fathers. Chapter 4

had an entire section of analysis focusing on the news articles defending a threatened masculinity. This section explored how the news articles reconfigured the boundaries of hegemonic masculinity in order for primary caregiving fathers to claim membership to it. Similar to Chapter 3 contrasting contemporary fathers with fathers of the past, this reconfiguration was achieved through negatively positioning uninvolved and traditional fathers, and therefore asserting that primary caregiving fathers are more assured, effective, and masculine.

While discourses of the new and involved father are emerging, this does not necessarily mean a move entirely away from expectations of being a financial provider. Gendered expectations appear to remain the same, where men must continue to prove their masculinity. Overall, the constructions and representations analysed in this thesis adds weight to the argument that we cannot simply conclude that hegemonic masculinity no longer guides understandings of what it means to be a man, and a father. The evidence does suggest, however, that the practice of fatherhood is evolving - men are doing more in the way of nurturing and caregiving. However, the extent to which guiding understandings and expectations of masculinity have evolved are less convincing. The analysis in this thesis demonstrates how hegemonic masculinity is reshaped and reworked to suit contemporary demands. Fathers are able to express a nurturing side and remove themselves for paid employment without losing their hegemonic privilege.

It is important that contemporary conceptualisations of masculinity and fatherhood reflect the lives and experiences of contemporary fathers. Research has argued that men are no longer complying with hegemonic ideals, and rather ideas of a caring masculinity better describe their experiences (Elliott, 2015). However, irrespective of the enthusiasm and positive direction surrounding the emergence of this new father in the masculinities literature, research needs to understand and examine the actual constructions and identity negotiations

of fathers.

While it is tempting to argue that fatherhood has changed and that contemporary parenting is no longer guided by strict gender roles, research needs to rather capture the complexity and often contradictory nature of fathering and parenting. Through this, research can better focus on the aim to make parenting more gender equitable. As well, through understanding the complexity fathers' face, research can also focus on providing the support needed to encourage greater father involvement. These ideas will be further explored below in the limitations and recommendations section.

A social constructionist and discursive approach

Given the contradictory and complex nature of fatherhood and masculinities, this thesis took a social constructionist approach and utilised discourse analysis in order to examine primary caregiving fathers and masculinities. Specifically, viewing fathering as a socially constructed concept is important as it recognises how fatherhood exists through social and cultural processes (Lupton & Barclay, 1997).

All three analytic chapters demonstrated how the discourses surrounding primary caregiving fathers construct and reproduce competing versions of reality. In particular, Chapter 3 explored how parenting texts draw on common sense cultural repertoires in order to try and normalise and legitimise the primary caregiving role for fathers. This paper demonstrated how various rhetorical and discursive strategies were utilised in order to navigate and make sense of the competing norms and expectations of contemporary fathers. As these books are marketed to assist primary caregiving fathers, it is reasonable to assume they are intended to support and help these fathers. However, through utilising discourse analysis it became clear that despite the aim to normalise and legitimise these fathers, the discursive strategies utilised ultimately reinforced and privileged hegemonic masculinity.

Chapter 4 highlighted how crucial it is to explore the discourses of contemporary fatherhood. This study identified that whilst newsprint media endorses primary caregiving fathers, at the same time they emphasise practical considerations that justify why it is unrealistic or impracticable for fathers to take on this role. Taking a discursive approach was significant as it allowed the analysis to capture these ideological dilemmas in everyday sense making. This contradictory way of accounting is not uncommon, and has been demonstrated as a way of upholding patriarchal privilege (Edley & Wetherell, 1999; Wetherell & Edley, 2014; Wetherell, Stiven & Potter, 1987). Therefore it is important for research to examine the impact discourse has on gendered practices of parenting.

Chapter 5 utilised a membership categorisation analysis (MCA) to explore in detail the significance and implications of how primary caregiving fathers are categorised. Previous literature has touched on exploring the language used to describe these fathers (Bulbeck, 2005; Winter & Pauwels, 2006), however this study was the first to employ an MCA to explore this in rigorous detail. The study in this thesis showed how the category "stay-at-home dad" was constructed as different from fathers located within a hegemonic norm. This is interesting, as whilst there are a variety of terms utilised to refer to men who are primary caregivers, "stay-at-home father/dad" is the most commonly used in previous research (Chesley, 2011; Doucet, 2004; Doucet & Merla, 2007; Dunn, Rochlen & O'Brien, 2013; Fischer & Anderson, 2012; Grbich, 1992, 1997; Kramer, Kelly & McCulloch, 2013; Merla, 2008; Rochlen, McKelley & Whittaker, 2010; Rochlen, Suizzo, McKelley & Scaringi, 2008; Solomon, 2014; Wall, Aboim & Marinho, 2007; Zimmerman, 2000).

The term "stay-at-home father/dad" is significant, as the categories and labels used to describe particular groups are embedded with culturally rich common-sense knowledge (Schegloff, 2007). This thesis demonstrates how this categorisation of primary caregiving fathers can be utilised to position these fathers as outside normative expectations. Winter and

Pauwels (2006) explored how the naming practices of primary caregiving fathers is done in a way that reflects gendered identities. In other words, primary caregiving fathers are named in ways that emphasises their departure from their traditional role as a financial provider.

How primary caregiving fathers are categorised both reflects and facilitates whether the caregiving role is normalised for fathers. Whilst Chapter 5 focused on the categorisation of primary caregiving fathers, Chapters 3 and 4 also identified how the terms used to describe primary caregiving fathers impact these fathers. Specifically, Chapter 3 demonstrated how the parenting texts discussed fathers taking issue with being labelled in ways that scrutinise their masculinity and suggest they take on the role of a mother. In response to this, the parenting texts utilised labels that are embedded with hegemonic qualities to highlight that primary caregiving can be masculine.

Chapter 4 identified how despite explicitly making claims of endorsing and promoting the primary caregiving role for fathers, the use of the label "Mr. Mum" throughout various news articles reinforced the gendered expectation that mothers are caregivers, and fathers are approximating a male version of this.

Overall, examining the discourses surrounding how we describe primary caregiving fathers, shows significant implications. Whilst the parenting texts are marketed to assist and support primary caregiving fathers, and the newsprint articles making claims to advocate this role for fathers, it is clear through their labelling practices that the primary caregiving role continues to be constructed as akin to mothering. This has significant implications for fathers taking on this role, as they are positioned and viewed as taking on the mothering role.

Fathering and mothering

The previous section demonstrated how primary caregiving fathers take issue with being described in ways that imply they are taking on the mothering role. This is because mothering

and fathering are treated as inherently distinct and unique gendered experiences. Unlike the argument of some researchers (e.g., Rehel, 2014; Risman, 1987), this thesis demonstrates how it is not possible for men who are primary caregivers to "become" mothers.

Fathers' experiences are distinctly different to that of mothers', and this is due to the gendered expectations associated with mothering and fathering. Chapter 3 demonstrated how contemporary parenting texts written for primary caregiving fathers frequently rely on heteronormativity to substantiate claims that fathers parent differently from mothers. These texts draw on the belief that people fall into one of two genders that come with associated roles. The analysis identified how this belief not only emphasised that fathers are distinct from mothers, but that they are inferior. The texts utilised biological essentialism to highlight that no matter how involved a father is, they cannot assume the role of a mother. The books analysed distinguished between the role of "caregiver" and "mother". A father can become a caregiver, but not a mother. In a similar way, the news articles analysed in Chapter 4 endorsed liberal ideals in relation to parenting, however these were juxtaposed with dubious and arguably sexist constructions of parenting that questioned the interchangeability of the parenting roles. In these constructions mothering and fathering were positioned as distinct roles that relied on traditional gendered notions of what it is to be a mother or father.

What these analyses demonstrate, is that fathers face a unique experience when it comes to taking on the primary caregiving role, as they are presented with accounts that construct and reproduce the notion that they are not "natural" or the "rightful" caregiver. Fathers must navigate these discourses in order to construct their own fathering identity. This contributes to our understanding of why fathers do not fulfil a position that is equivalent to that of women who are primary caregivers (Doucet, 2004).

What is clear then, is that while fathers are increasingly taking on the roles and responsibilities traditionally associated with mothers, the experience of fatherhood is

different to the experience of motherhood, due to gendered norms and expectations. This has implications for understanding contemporary fathering. If the aim is to encourage greater father involvement, it is important to understand that involved fathering is not equivalent to involved mothering. This is not suggesting that fathers cannot parent as fully as women can, nor that they cannot be successful co-parents. Rather, the unique experiences of fathers, as demonstrated in this thesis, need to be considered in order to effectively conceptualise contemporary fathering. As well, research that seeks to encourage greater father involvement, will benefit from understanding that fathering is a unique gendered experience.

However, this thesis has demonstrated how fatherhood is negatively constructed as distinct from motherhood. Much of the analysis identified how parenting texts (Chapter 3) and newsprint media (Chapters 4 and 5) build up accounts that masculinise primary caregiving fathers, and seek to position primary caregiving fathers within the realm of hegemonic masculinity. These constructions and accounts work to perpetuate hegemonic privilege for men, even when they occupy a traditionally feminine space. Despite the negativity, these constructions and representations must be considered when exploring contemporary fatherhood, as everyday fathers are faced with and are required to negotiate with these constructions and accounts of fathering.

Overall, this thesis highlights the significance of understanding and examining the theoretical underpinnings of contemporary fatherhood and masculinities as they are complex, frequently contradictory, and significantly contribute to the identity negotiation of primary caregiving fathers.

Contribution to knowledge base

The previous section outlined how this thesis contributes to the theoretical considerations when it comes to examining primary caregiving fathers and masculinities. This section

explores how this thesis contributes to the previous literature that focuses more on the broader empirical approaches to examining primary caregiving fathers. Specifically, the research that has looked at the reasons why fathers are taking on the primary caregiving role, the reactions and attitudes toward primary caregiving fathers, and finally, the various actions and behaviours primary caregiving fathers engage in.

What becomes clear is that, in taking the results of the research in this thesis, and how it relates to the previous empirical literature, masculinity is a recurring theme. Discussions of why fathers take on the primary caregiving role, the attitudes toward them, and the compensatory actions these fathers engage in, all orient toward normative understandings and expectations of masculinity.

Motivations: Why do men become primary caregivers?

Research that has focused on exploring the motivations behind why fathers are taking on the primary caregiving role has largely been quantitative and specifically sought to quantify or provide a hierarchical list of reasons. Whilst such an approach is important when first seeking to explore fathers taking on the primary caregiving role, it is also important for research to move beyond simply describing this group of fathers.

Notably, while this thesis did not seek to examine discourses surrounding reasons why fathers have taken on this role, in examining the parenting texts and newsprint media a recurring theme of choice was identified. Specifically, discussions surrounding why fathers are increasingly taking on the primary caregiving role or accounts of why particular fathers took on the role all related to the men not choosing this role or having no other choice, due to financial or employment considerations. This is no surprise, given empirical findings that the leading reason fathers assume the role relates to economic factors and employment (Burkstrand-Reid, 2012; Chesley, 2011; Doucet, 2004; Doucet & Merla, 2007; Dunn,

Rochlen & O'Brien, 2013; Fischer & Anderson, 2012; Grbich, 1992, 1997; Harrington et al., 2012; Merla, 2008; Roberts-Holmes, 2009; Rochlen, McKelley & Whittaker, 2010; Rochlen, Suizzo, McKelley & Scaringi, 2008; Solomon, 2014; Wall, Aboim & Marinho, 2007; West et al., 2009; Wolff et al., 2011; Zimmerman, 2000).

Chapter 3 demonstrated how economic and employment factors were drawn on to justify accounts of fathers not choosing the primary caregiving role. Fathers were not constructed as wanting to take on the role, but rather circumstances resulted in the uptake of the caregiving role. Similarly, Chapter 4 showed how the media does not construct fathers as factoring in emotional or personal interests. Rather, the decision to take on the primary caregiving role was framed as pragmatic. Chapter 5 also demonstrated this, where the decision to take on the role was framed in the media as "being a good financial decision". This study also demonstrated how primary caregiving fathers were positioned as not taking on the role out of choice, but rather, they do what is considered the right thing, or even the hard thing, to do, therefore demonstrating and remaining within normative boundaries of masculinity.

What becomes clear already is that the accounts of primary caregiving fathers in parenting texts and newsprint media focus less on the positive factors that contribute to fathers taking this role on. Rather, the focus is somewhat negative, relating to how fathers "end up" in this role. Further, the analyses presented in this thesis also demonstrate that much of the discussion related to why fathers are not, or should not, be primary caregivers. Chapter 3, for example, demonstrated how fathers struggle in the primary caregiving role due to relinquishing paid employment. This was because financial provision was constructed as central to fathers' identity and therefore they were encouraged to engage in part-time work or plan a return to work in order to remain tied to the financial provider role.

Further, Chapter 4, identified how the news media utilised economic factors as a

justification for why fathers should remain financial providers. The analysis showed how, despite explicitly encouraging fathers to become more involved in caregiving, the traditional expectation of fathers as financial providers, was frequently invoked to justify why it continues to make more economic sense for fathers to engage in full-time paid work rather than fulfilling a caregiving role.

Following on from this, similar to previous research, this thesis also identified claims to "maternal gatekeeping" as a factor for why more fathers cannot, and do not, assume the primary caregiving role (Craig, 2006; McBride et al., 2005). Specifically, Chapter 4 showed how the media depicted fathers as unable to take on the caregiving role unless the mother has first chosen to step away from it. These accounts presented fathers as wanting to be more involved, but mothers actively prevent this from occurring.

In line with the previous empirical literature, this thesis did identify the influence of a father's own upbringing and their own childhood experiences of parenting (Grbich, 1997) as well as a father's desire to be a primary caregiver (Burkstrand-Reid, 2012; Doucet, 2004; Fischer & Anderson, 2012; Grbich, 1992, 1997; Kramer, Kelly & McCulloch, 2013; Roberts-Holmes, 2009; Solomon, 2014; Waller, 2009; Wolff et al., 2011). However, these factors too were constructed in a somewhat negative way.

Chapter 3 demonstrated how parenting texts depicted contemporary fathering as a form of competition with traditional fathering. Contemporary fathers were described as wanting to be more and do more than their own fathers. It was this motivation that was constructed as influencing increasing father involvement. These findings reinforce research that has shown that an upbringing where one's father was emotionally distant or physically absent can lead to men being motivated to be more involved in caregiving (Merla, 2008; West et al., 2009; Wolff et al., 2011).

Further, Chapter 4 identified accounts of fathers' desiring to be primary caregivers

within the media. However, this desire was not constructed as a factor that influenced the uptake of the role. Rather, despite fathers' interest in the caregiving role, they were constructed as unable to take it on due to financial considerations.

The previous empirical research has clearly focused attention toward exploring why fathers are taking on this caregiving role. However, as the research in this thesis shows, more research should focus on why fathers are *not* taking on the caregiving role. An arguably significant barrier for why actual fathers are not taking on the caregiving role is due to the many accounts offered up justifying why fathers cannot and should not take on the caregiving role.

This thesis makes clear that a desire to be a more involved father is not sufficient in itself to result in assuming the caregiving role, indicating that contemporary understandings of fatherhood, are not evolving as rapidly as what may be suggested. Overall, the constructions and representations identified in this thesis mobilised very strict ways in which fathers can take on the primary caregiving role, and it appears this was to ensure they can remain within the boundaries of hegemonic masculinity. This supports the argument made by Doucet (2016) that fathers' choices in regards to paid work and caregiving are bound up in cultural structures and ideologies.

Research should seek to critically explore and deconstruct the types of accounts demonstrated within this thesis with the aim to reconstruct them and offer new possibilities. If constructions and representations of fathers taking on the caregiving role continue to be framed negatively it is unlikely that this role will be considered normative for men. It is important to focus less on what fathers choose to do, and rather focus on what choices are made possible (Doucet, 2016).

Reactions and attitudes

Chapter 1 explored how primary caregiving fathers are exposed to many norms and expectations which they deviate from; therefore they face varying reactions and attitudes. The findings in this thesis are consistent with previous research in that reactions and attitudes toward primary caregiving fathers were largely negative (Brescoll & Uhlmann 2005; Bulbeck, 2005; Burkstrand-Reid, 2012; Callister, 1995; Chesley, 2011; Doucet, 2004; 2006; 2009; 2009a; Doucet & Merla, 2007; Dunn, Rochlen & O'Brien, 2013; Gaunt, 2013; Grbich, 1992; Harrington, Van Deusen & Mazar, 2012; Merla, 2008; Penfold, 1985; Roberts-Holmes, 2009; Rochlen, McKelley & Whittaker, 2010; Sinno & Killen, 2009; Smith, 1998; Solomon, 2014).

Chapter 3 demonstrated that the capability of primary caregiving fathers is frequently questioned (Doucet, 2009; 2009a; Harrington, Van Deusen & Mazar, 2012; Robert-Holmes, 2009; Rochlen, Suizzo, McKelley & Scaringi, 2008; Smith, 1998). The parenting texts analysed constructed fathers as inferior at providing care compared with mothers. Further, the worst negative reaction a father could receive was constructed as being likened to a mother, highlighting threats to their masculinity.

Both studies on Australian newsprint media, Chapters 4 and 5, demonstrated how primary caregiving fathers receive negative attitudes and reactions. Specifically, Chapter 4 described how fathers feel excluded by mothers, making them feel unwelcome and uncomfortable at particular places. This reinforces the findings that primary caregiving fathers experience negative reactions toward them when they go to places that are traditionally seen as places for mothers (e.g., school, day care, or parenting groups) (Merla, 2008; Smith, 1998).

Further, Chapter 4 identified how the news articles described that is it impracticable for fathers to be primary caregivers due to a variety of issues and difficulties they face. In

particular, they were described as being viewed as suspicious, and at risk of being perceived as a potential child abuser. Research has previously identified how many primary caregiving fathers feel they make others uneasy and uncomfortable due to their role, and so they feel they have to be careful and cautious in their behaviours (Doucet, 2006; Grbich, 1992; Smith, 1998). These fathers described feeling as though society always has an "eye" on them (Doucet, 2006). Specifically, primary caregiving fathers feel there are certain perceptions about what is appropriate and acceptable physical contact with their children (Doucet, 2009; 2009a). These barriers to father involvement demonstrate how social policies and gendered assumptions continue to disincentivise fathers and reproduce the notion that fathers are not primary caregivers. The research in this thesis demonstrates how these gendered assumptions are perpetuated via newsprint media. Greater social and academic discourse needs to be directed at critiquing and debating these gendered assumptions.

Specific to Chapter 5, it was identified that primary caregiving fathers were categorised as outside of the norm and therefore experience feelings of being treated differently including a loss of respect from other men, due to taking on the caregiving role. These fathers described feeling as though they are treated like women, which reinforces previous research that demonstrates many primary caregiving fathers feel they are not considered socially acceptable, and feel others question their masculinity, their own partners included (Burkstrand-Reid, 2012; Dunn, Rochlen & O'Brien, 2013; Merla, 2008).

Further, the analysis in Chapter 5 also identified how the media depict primary caregiving fathers as experiencing positive reactions and attention. Interestingly, though, none of the articles described these positive reactions in any detail. Previous research has shown how primary caregiving fathers experience a lot of positive reactions and support from others, feeling "special" and like "exceptional" fathers (Rochlen, Suizzo, McKelley & Scaringi, 2008; Solomon, 2014). It is significant, however, that this thesis identified that these

positive reactions are undercut by other men reacting negatively toward primary caregiving fathers for receiving these positive appraisals.

The analyses in this thesis add to the claim that reactions and attitudes toward primary caregiving fathers continue to be negative. Whilst this thesis has been critical of these negative representations, it is important to note the positive effect these texts and news articles have in the lives of primary caregiving fathers. Being featured and represented in this way works to promote and normalise the caregiving role for fathers and demystifies the idea that men are not caregivers. However, reproducing the negative reactions and attitudes constructs and reinforces the idea that this role is risky for men. It is important to provide a realistic representation of the experiences of primary caregiving fathers, however, providing a site for these negative reactions and attitudes to be circulated contributes to the maintenance of gendered norms and expectations of parenting.

In saying that, it is also important to be critical of praising fathers for taking on the primary caregiving role. Nentwich (2008) posed the argument that fathers who assume the primary caregiving role need to reject arguments that are highly supportive and encouraging. Framing these fathers as special and as an exception reinforces the notion that this role is unusual for men. In order to normalise this role and to disrupt masculine norms of financial provision, these fathers need to take on this caregiving role with ignorance to masculinity and act as though it is unquestioned and "naturally" given (Nentwich, 2008).

Chapter 3 identified how the parenting texts analysed praised fathers on their ability to bring masculine qualities into the primary caregiving role. Further, Chapters 4 and 5 showed how the media praises fathers for their increasing levels of involvement, and how they are doing more than traditional fathers. Such praise not only reinforces this role as unusual as per Nentwich's (2008) argument, but it also justifies continuing inequality and inaction (Wetherell, Stiven & Potter, 1987). Contemporary fathers are celebrated and

rewarded for their increasing involvement, however, as previously demonstrated, these fathers simultaneously remain within the boundaries of traditional fathering and hegemonic masculinity.

Compensatory actions

The background provided in Chapter 1 suggested that many primary caregiving fathers adopt either dismissive or proactive strategies in order to cope with the various negative reactions and attitudes they face. The parenting texts analysed in Chapter 3 identified constructions of proactive strategies, where primary caregiving fathers were described as providing care in a uniquely masculine way. This is similar to previous research identifying that primary caregiving fathers take on self-provisioned unpaid work, or engage in masculine hobbies (e.g. renovating and fixing up the house) in order to legitimate their removal from the paid workforce (Burkstrand-Reid, 2012; Doucet, 2004; Doucet & Merla, 2007; Grbich, 1992; Latshaw, 2011; 2015).

Similar to what previous research has found, Chapter 3 demonstrated how parenting texts construct fathers as not choosing the primary caregiving role or it is framed as temporary (Smith, 1998). These constructions reduce the effects or dismiss negative reactions by making clear that primary caregiving does not become part of a father's identity, but is rather a role they take on. This was also shown in Chapter 5, where the media constructed fathers as not choosing the caregiving role, but rather were framed as stoic as they take on the role out of a sense of responsibility to do the right thing.

Although primary caregiving fathers are constructed as utilising a combination of both dismissive and proactive strategies (Merla, 2008) in the parenting texts and newsprint articles, dismissive strategies appeared to be mentioned more frequently. As discussed in each chapter, the ramifications that result from these dismissive strategies (i.e. framing the

uptake of the role as not a choice, framing the role as temporary, and embedding masculine qualities into the caregiving role) is concerning. In everyday life, fathers should be encouraged to engage in more proactive compensatory strategies that seek to gain primary caregiving fathers more social legitimacy. For example, previous research has identified how some primary caregiving fathers develop playgroups, allowing them a place for networking and support, as well as involving themselves in media appearances in order to educate, promote and gain acceptance for other primary caregiving fathers (Grbich, 1992). Other primary caregiving fathers have been shown to remove the focus on gender differences, and rather focus on the common experiences that both mothers and fathers face as primary caregivers (Smith, 1998). These approaches to fighting negative reactions and attitudes will promote and bring about positive change in the lives of primary caregiving fathers as opposed to fathers drawing on traits of hegemonic masculinity to transfer patriarchal privilege into the primary caregiving role.

Limitations and recommendations

As is the case with all research, this thesis has limitations which will be discussed here. Limitations specific to each particular study have been discussed in each respective chapter. Therefore the aim of this section is to explore and discuss some of the broader limitations that have the greatest potential impact on the ability to effectively draw conclusions from the research reported in this thesis.

It should be stressed that this research was primarily concerned with primary caregiving fathers. Whilst this decision was intentional and in line with the research enquiry, it does mean that the analyses were not explicitly situated within a broader context of how mothering is concurrently constructed and represented. Ideally, research should seek to explore how mothering and fathering are concurrently understood. Therefore, it is best to

view the research in this thesis as contributing to the broader line of enquiry focusing on discussions relating to gendered constructions of parenting and gendered divisions of care and paid work. Given this, future research should turn toward examining discourses surrounding mothering, and working mothers, and how fathers negotiate with and respond to these discourses.

Further, given the focus of primary caregiving fathers in this thesis, it is important to highlight that the notion of a new, involved, and nurturing father does not only apply to those who assume the primary caregiving role. The decision to focus on primary caregiving fathers was due to the explicit uptake of a caring and nurturing role amongst such fathers. This means that this thesis cannot contribute to a discussion on the masculine identity negotiation of fathers who remain in paid work. Future research should seek to explore the utility of a caring masculinity and a new and involved father identity in fathers who remain in an arguably traditional fathering role. Given the findings in this thesis that hegemonic masculinity still guides understandings of primary caregiving fathers, it would be interesting to explore the role caring masculinity plays in the experiences of working fathers as well.

Another opportunity for future research is in the parenting texts analysed in Chapter 3. The nine parenting texts analysed in this chapter included both parenting manuals, written as instructional guides for fathers, as well as books that were instructive although written through an autobiographical narrative. The interpretative repertoires identified were common across both styles of books, however, there is scope for more explicit analyses on the contrast between the two types to determine variation in the ways in which accounts were worked up, or a focus on the more experiential accounts presented in the autobiographical texts.

A final consideration surrounds fathers' potential perceptions and potential uptake of the constructions and representations identified in this thesis. The research presented in this thesis cannot speak to the level of influence that parenting texts or newsprint media have on

fathers' identity construction. Nor can this thesis speak to whether the constructions and representations of primary caregiving fathers reflect or capture the experiences of these actual fathers. Whilst not a limitation per se, the decision to focus on constructions and representations does however have these resulting consequences. Steven's (2015) study focused on both media representations and fathers' responses to these, demonstrated interesting results. In this study, the fathers interviewed claimed to not identify with the constructions and representations in the media, however they simultaneously reproduced similar accounts as shown in the media. Further research should focus on incorporating both media representations and fathers' own accounts, in order to further examine the influence of normative understandings and expectations in the unique and varying lives of fathers. This would function to examine not only what dominant discourses are circulated, but would also ensure that we do not conclude that these understandings reflect the experiences of all fathers.

Concluding thoughts

Taken together, this thesis highlights the complex and intertwined nature of fathering and masculinities in contemporary society. It is currently understood that fatherhood is evolving, and fathers are doing more than fathers of the past. However, this thesis took primary caregiving fathers as an example to demonstrate that this change in fatherhood may be more cosmetic than an actual change in parenting practices. Further, this thesis highlights why research needs to focus on examining the sites (such as parenting texts and news media) in which fatherhood is constructed and negotiated.

It is important to note, in concluding this thesis, that we should view everyday primary caregiving fathers as both hindered by and enabled by contemporary understandings of masculinities. In recognising the continuing influence of hegemonic masculinity, it is important to see how it both hinders and helps men. Fathers are required to negotiate with

hegemonic masculinity as it informs norms and expectations of what it means to be a man and father. Therefore, it can hinder men who do not conform or comply with these expectations. This thesis demonstrated that primary caregiving fathers are constructed as though they are limited by the expectation that they should be financial providers and not caregivers. However, men and fathers also utilised hegemonic masculinity in order to gain social legitimacy and privilege. This thesis also demonstrated how fathers are constructed to occupy a traditionally feminine space, such as primary caregiving, without relinquishing the privilege that hegemonic masculinity affords them.

However, it is undeniable that fatherhood is evolving, the uncertainty remains within how much or in what ways it is evolving. As previously discussed in this chapter, social change and the introduction of new social norms are frequently inconsistent and contradictory (Wetherell & Edley, 2014). It can be argued that this is what we are seeing with contemporary fatherhood. Fathers are navigating new terrain, and it is unsurprising that they frequently draw on what is known (i.e. hegemonic and normative masculinities) in order to make sense of their role.

What this thesis contributes, is the suggestion that we cannot shy away from this complexity if we aim to understand, conceptualise, and research contemporary fathering and masculinities.

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Appendix

Appendix A

Table 3: *Newspaper Sample for Chapters 4 and 5*

No.	Article Title	Newspaper	Date
1.	*Domesticated Dads Waive Tradition*	Townsville Bulletin	15/09/2012
2.	*The Father of All Dilemmas*	Daily Telegraph	01/03/2014
3.	*Dads on The Line*	Sun Herald	07/04/2013
4.	*Fathers Thriving on The Home Front*	The Advertiser	29/08/2013
5.	*Breaking Down The Pink-Collar Barriers at Work And Home*	Sun Herald	16/08/2015
6.	*Push For Loan Scheme to Help Stay-at-Home Dads*	Canberra Times	27/08/2013
7.	*Stay-at-Home Truths For Dads*	Hobart Mercury	29/06/2012
8.	*Dads Number One*	Hobart Mercury	30/08/2013
9.	*More Dads Opt to Take on Stay-at-Home Role*	The West Australian	21/01/2014
10.	*Father's Day*	Sunday Mail	07/10/2012
11.	*For These Dads, The Real Life is at Home*	Hobart Mercury	04/09/2016
12.	*Manning up For Role Change*	Wentworth Courier	28/09/2016
13.	*Daddy Issues*	Herald Sun	05/09/2015
14.	*Women Need to Back Away From The Housework*	Mail Online	26/02/2014
15.	*Stay-at-Home Dads Have Their Work Cut*	Manly Daily	16/11/2013

	Out Trying to Leave		
16.	*Home is The Heart For a Modern Man*	The Daily Telegraph	28/01/2012
17.	*Never Married And Happy? Not Likely if You're a Bloke*	The Advertiser	17/10/2015
18.	*Home is Where The Husband is*	The Sunday Morning Herald	08/04/2013
19.	*We Hear About Stay-at-Home Dads, But do They Exist in Your Neighbourhood?*	Weekend Courier	01/03/2013
20.	*Dad's on The Dishes*	The Daily Telegraph	28/01/2012
21.	*The Great Divide*	The Sun Herald	24/06/2012
22.	*Twerking Selfie a Hash*	Illawarra Mercury	02/01/2014
23.	*Primary Carer Job 'Isolating'*	Mordialloc Chelsea Leader	31/08/2016
24.	*Breadwinners in a Brave New World*	The Australian Financial Review	18/01/2014
25.	*Meet The New Mr Mums*	Manly Daily	31/08/2013
26.	*Stay-at-Home Dad Not One of The Guys*	The Gold Coast Bulletin	13/07/2013
27.	*Education, Ambition Put Women in Breadwinner's Role as Gen Y Questions Traditional Family Structure*	The Sunday Times	07/09/2014
28.	*I Raise The Kids While my Wife Works*	Sunday Herald Sun	19/08/2012
29.	*Dads at Home And Loving it*	The Sunday Times	07/09/2014
30.	*The Kids Come First For More Stay-at-Home Dads*	The Daily Telegraph	12/07/2012
31.	*The Secret Lives of House Husbands*	The Sun Herald	13/07/2014

32.	*Dads Take Charge of The Home Front*	The Sun Herald	29//03/2015
33.	*Trading Places*	The Australian	02/08/2014
34.	*Surprise Economics of The Stay-at-Home Dad*	The Australian	31/05/2016
35.	*Warts-And-All Account of Life on The Home Front*	The Sun Herald	20/07/2014
36.	*The Masculine Mystique*	The Sun Herald	19/08/2012
37.	*Men at Work*	Sunday Herald Sun	08/06/2014
38.	*Pay Parity Will Help Stay at Home Dads*	Herald Sun	06/08/2012
39.	*Stay-at-Home Dads and Teflon-Coated iChildren*	Mandurah Mail	16/05/2013
40.	*Dads Get Polished in Style Stakes*	Herald Sun	13/02/2014
41.	*Luke's Hands Are Full*	Centralian Advocate	23/10/201
42.	*Equal Parenting: Dad's The Word, Ever so Gradually*	The Age	30/08/2016
43.	*What Dads Will Give Their Loved Ones This Father's Day*	The Sun Herald	04/09/2016
44.	*Dads Happy at Home*	Herald Sun	13/07/2012
45.	*Fine Tuning Work/Life Balance*	Sunshine Coast Daily	25/01/2014
46.	*Nathan's a Daddy Cool And Face of Growing Trend*	Inner West Courier	14/08/2012
47.	*While Clint Creagen Will Take a Humorous Approach*	The Warrnambool Standard	15/01/2015
48.	*Daddy Issues: Collective Blind Spot on Parental Leave Pay is The Mother of All*	The Sydney Morning Herald	20/08/2013

	Slights		
49.	*Being a Father Saved my Life*	The Courier Mail	03/09/2016
50.	*Some Baby Steps Are Vital in Waking up to Role of Fathers*	The Border Mail	28/10/2013
51.	*In Defence of Stay-at-Home Dads*	The Australian Financial Review	13/12/2014
52.	*Swing Into Action*	Herald Sun	04/05/2013
53.	*Nappy Ending – Putting Fathers in The Picture*	Brisbane News	16/05/2012
54.	*Portrait of Today's Daddy*	The Advertiser	25/08/2013
55.	*Mr Mums on Rise*	Northern Territory News	04/02/2012
56.	*Dads Can do it, Why Not Mums?*	The News Mail	13/04/2015
57.	*More Dads Electing to Stay at Home*	The Morning Bulletin	24/10/2014
58.	*Fun For Families*	The Coffs Coast Advocate	23/03/2013
59.	*The Childcare Conundrum Hurdles Hamer Back-to Work Mums*	Inner West Courier	03/07/2012
60.	*Today's Dad is More Hands-on Than Ever Before*	The Cairns Eye	04/10/2013
61.	*Dad's Stay-Home Dilemma*	Sunday Tasmanian	03/06/2012
62.	*A Question of Gender Balance Stereotypes Need Tweaking*	Geelong Advertiser	20/11/2013
63.	*Hubby's Told to Lift Game*	Sunshine Coast Daily	19/05/2016
64.	*Dads Army a Class Act*	The Cairns Eye	17/05/2014
65.	*More Breadwinning Mothers*	The Canberra Times	31/05/2013

66.	*A Cooking Class to Get Your Teeth Into*	The Advocate	21/02/2012
67.	*My Dad, Phil Hillier, Passed Away Last Week*	Wyndham Weekly	18/03/2015
68.	*Dads The Final Frontier in The War on Sexism*	Sunshine Coast Daily	01/03/2013
69.	*Happy to Have a SAHD*	The Australian	29/09/2012
70.	*When Ambition And Family Collide*	The Australian	02/12/2015
71.	*Unsung Heroes*	The Sun Herald	06/09/2015
72.	*The Actor And The Artist: Playing Swapsies*	The Sydney Morning Herald	26/05/2012
73.	*Dad's The Word*	News Review	27/06/2012
74.	*Kensuke Miyazaki to Become First Ever Japanese MP to Take Paternity Leave*	The Guardian	07/01/2016
75.	*Man About-Turn*	The Sun Herald	21/09/2014
76.	*Firey is a Family Man 'Mr Mum' on The Weekend – Australian Father of The Year*	Mt Druitt Standard	25/07/2012
77.	*Men Resist Mr Mum Role in Parental Leave*	Townsville Bulletin	11/09/2012
78.	*John Gass Doesn't Mind if You Call Him "Daddy Daycare" or "Mr Mum"*	Tweed Daily News	23/11/2013
79.	*Is This What a Man Looks Like?*	Sunday Telegraph	24/08/2014
80.	*Kidspot News*	The Daily Telegraph	08/03/2014
81.	*Conversations*	Sunday Mail	21/10/2012
82.	*Readers in For a Treat*	Noosa News	11/05/2012
83.	*Life Within Limits Career Counselling*	The Deal	19/07/2013
84.	*It is Well Documented That Men Have a Lot*	Queensland Country	11/07/2013

	More Superannuation	Life	
85.	*Play While Not Away*	Coolum Weekly	21/03/2014
86.	*Jobs Win For Parents*	Sunday Mail	10/02/2013
87.	*First Easter Eggs in New Family Joy*	Milton Ulladulla Times	17/07/2014
88.	*Premier Will Survive Wrath of The Jobs Cut*	Townsville Bulletin	01/09/2012
89.	*Why Not More Stay-at-Home Dads?*	The Age	06/09/2015
90.	*Keep Dads in Touch*	The Advertiser	26/09/2015
91.	*Here Comes Our Lucy*	The West Australian	11/02/2015
92.	*Rise in Stay-at-Home Dads*	Coffs Coast Advocate	25/10/2014
93.	*A Husband's Challenges*	The Newcastle Herald	20/06/2014
94.	*Neglected Victims of Mental Illness Dads Fight Demons*	Geelong Advertiser	11/09/2012
95.	*What? No Children? Fending Off The Final Female Taboo*	The Age	07/02/2013
96.	*Messy Play a Winner*	Port Stephens Examiner	03/11/2015
97.	*Gillard's Pitch To Working Mothers*	Sunday Telegraph	10/02/2013
98.	*Women Must Bite Savings Bullet For Security*	Timaru Herald	19/08/2013
99.	*In Brief*	The Queensland Times	23/10/2014
100.	*TV Dads Earn High Esteem*	Herald Sun	11/09/2012
101.	*Recently I wrote About The Changing Roles of Parents And How we Have Desexed*	Wyndham Weekly	01/04/2015
102.	*House Husbands Are Far From Home Alone*	The Sunday Mail	02/09/2012
103.	*Ready For a Fresh Start?*	The Australian Financial Review	28/07/2012

104.	*Housebound*	The Age	30/08/2012
105.	*Desperate Dads Hit The Spotlight*	The Sydney Morning Herald	21/05/2012
106.	*Readers Submit Pictures of Dads*	The Chronicle	05/09/2015
107.	*Fresh Look at Aussie Family Lives*	Centralian Advocate	05/06/2012
108.	*Surfing Mums Unite*	The Northern Star	08/09/2012
109.	*Gibney's New Role a Mental Challenge*	Herald Sun	20/08/2012
110.	*Trying to Get a Man to See a Doctor is One Thing*	The Area News	28/03/2012
111.	*Stay-at-Home Dads a Hit*	The Advertiser	04/09/2012
112.	*Readers Young And Old Have Embraced The Challenge*	The Age	27/10/2013
113.	*A Program at Hazelbrook is Offering a Playgroup Just*	Blue Mountains Gazette	14/11/2012
114.	*Ask Sue-Belinda Genders Explored in TV Show*	Townsville Bulletin	07/05/2012
115.	*Champions of Local Drama*	The Australian Financial Review	03/06/2013
116.	*Malcolm: 'It's Not Fair to Leave it to The Ladies'*	The Morning Bulletin	30/10/2015
117.	*Part-Time Work Right For Parents*	Sunday Herald Sun	10/02/2013
118.	*Pedophile Fear is Judging All Men*	The Sunday Mail	30/09/2012
119.	*Don't Tell The Kids, But I'm Having a Work Affair*	Herald Sun	15/11/2014
120.	*It's Mr Dad, Not Mr Mom*	The Daily Telegraph	16/01/2014

121.	*Smashing The Glass Ceiling*	The Courier Mail	07/03/2012
122.	*Work-Life Balance is Ever Exclusive*	Hobart Mercury	14/02/2014
123.	*Let's Now Sing Mothers' Praises*	Illawarra Mercury	21/03/2015
124.	*Boss Man*	Sunday Herald	29/06/2014
125.	*Mr & Mrs Wife*	The Australian	19/02/2016
126.	*Glamour it Sure Ain't*	The Advertiser	07/06/2012
127.	*Few Dads Play Mums*	Darwin Palmerston Sun	12/09/2012
128.	*Riding Loud And Proud For Silent Killer*	Western Suburbs Weekly	21/08/2012
129.	*Mr Mum Army on March*	Hobart Mercury	12/07/2012
130.	*Home And Hosed*	The Canberra Times	02/09/2012
131.	*Women Put on Equity Track*	The Australian	26/02/2016
132.	*So Sorry For Intruding*	Illawarra Mercury	05/10/2015
133.	*The Better Half*	The Sun Herald	25/03/2012
134.	*Strewth*	The Australian	02/06/2015
135.	*Friendly Faces of Career Contact*	Kalgoorlie Miner	25/07/2012
136.	*Jason Wants to Feed Baby Boy*	Sunshine Coast Daily	19/06/2014
137.	*She'll Pack Them to The Rafters*	The Sunday Times	26/01/2014
138.	*All Things to All People*	Illawarra Mercury	29/03/2014
139.	*The Mum to be MP And Her Mr Mum*	The Advertiser	09/10/2014
140.	*Aurizon Puts Women on Track to Workplace Equity*	The Australian	27/02/2016
141.	*Quick View*	Manly Daily	04/09/2013
142.	*Sport is About Playing Games With Mates*	Fraser Coast Chronicle	06/05/2016
143.	*Dads Shy Off Baby Duties*	Geelong Advertiser	11/09/2012

144.	*Bob's Roo Grass Returns*	Northern Daily Leader	22/05/2012
145.	*Emotional Send-Off*	Port Macquarie News	03/02/2014
146.	*Chris Lived For Family*	Townsville Bulletin	14/11/2012
147.	*Chris Judd a Mr Mum For Rebecca*	The Sunday Times	29/05/2016
148.	*Post-Army Life a Battle*	Sunshine Coast Daily	06/04/2016
149.	*Acoustic Paradise*	Central Coast	30/07/2014
150.	*Why Men Make Terrible Mothers*	Sunday Herald Sun	28/09/2014
151.	*Darryn Turns The Tables on Roxby*	Roxby Downs Sun	28/01/2015
152.	*Focusing on my Son*	Tweed Daily News	23/11/2013
153.	*Good News For Returning Paula*	The West Australian	24/12/2013
154.	*Fev's Doing it For Alex And The Kids*	Herald Sun	01/06/2012
155.	*Deb's a Friendly Face*	Eyre Peninsula Tribune	20/02/2013
156.	*The Miracles of Wine And Nappies*	Sunshine Coast Daily	14/07/2012
157.	*Well Conditioned*	Kalgoorlie Miner	27/07/2012
158.	*Apprentice Builds a New Start*	Mudgee Guardian	13/05/2013
159.	*Model Signs Nationally*	Daily Examiner	05/03/2013
160.	*Chatroom*	Gold Coast Bulletin	12/01/2015
161.	*Learning Curve For a Different Life*	Manly Daily	05/09/2015
162.	*Of Men And Their Musings*	Noosa News	20/07/2012
163.	*Show of The Week*	The Sun Herald	02/09/2012
164.	*Mr Mom: 54 Aussie Men Give Birth*	The Advertiser	16/11/2014
165.	*Daddy Days*	Herald Sun	14/04/2012
166.	*Free to Air*	The Age	02/09/2012
167.	*Casualties as Hubby Morphs Into Mr Mom*	The Advertiser	13/10/2013
168.	*Thirty Years Ago, 'Tootsie' Made us Laugh –*	The Record	20/12/2012

	And Think		
169.	*Help Next Door*	The Northern Star	28/12/2012
170.	*Chatroom*	Gold Coast Bulletin	15/01/2015
171.	*Modern Family Strife*	Herald Sun	14/07/2017
172.	*Detroit: A Michigan University Has Issued Its Annual*	The Warrnambool Standard	02/01/2014
173.	*Laugh it up*	Northern Territory News	05/01/2014
174.	*Comedy Showroom Review*	The Guardian	15/06/2016
175.	*Inside a Father's Brain*	Illawarra Mercury	29/05/2014
176.	*Crazy or Brave*	The Australian	02/04/2016