Opt Out or Locked Out?

Examining Fathers' Participation in Primary Care of Preschool Children

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Abstract

This exploratory, mixed methods study, reports on the work and care arrangements of primary earner fathers and the policy, employment, and intra-couple factors that may inhibit or enhance their participation in primary caregiving. It draws on data from a large, national survey of 951 working fathers and semi-structured interviews with 14 couples. The study responds to changing work and family demographics in Australia and the persistence of women's disadvantage at work and in the home. This has sparked increased interest in policies that support a more equal distribution of work and care amongst parents. Much of the research to this end has centred on women alone. Comparatively, we know little about how fathers use and perceive policies and provisions for the care of their children or their relationship with work and broader gender equality endeavours. Australia is found particularly lacking in this context due to the weak statutory support for shared care amongst parents. This research draws on Pierre Bourdieu's Theory of Practice and Teresa Rees' Gender Mainstreaming Framework as a lens through which the current state of work and care in Australia is assessed, and later, the results of this study. In line with research found elsewhere, the findings from this study strongly suggest Australian fathers are unlikely to take up a primary caregiver leave such as Paid Parental Leave (PPL) if doing so causes a financial loss to the family. The interview data supports these findings in that only cost neutral care decisions were considered when making primary care arrangements for children. Workplace factors however, also contributed heavily to the way paid work and care was distributed amongst couples. This was true for both parents. The findings align with international research, showing policy, relative earnings, and the workplace play a significant role in the negotiation of the work and caregiving arrangements amongst couples. Considering these findings, the current statutory PPL scheme and the legislation that covers flexible work practices in Australia appears inadequate in terms of meeting their gender equality objectives. This thesis suggests the degree of workplace influence on work and care decisions is particularly dominant in nations such as Australia where the public policy support for gender equal caregiving is heavily weighted towards support of the mother as the primary caregiver. This places employers in an instrumental position to progress and shape Australia's gender equality aspirations and the distribution of work and care amongst parents particularly. This research supports the use of gender mainstreaming tools and techniques for both employers and the state as a potentially effective change strategy to de-gender work and care in Australia.

Declaration

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma at any university or equivalent institution and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, this thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference is made in the text of the thesis.

Signature: [redacted]

Print Name: Samone McCurdy

Date:

This research is dedicated to the generous parents that took time to contribute to this research and shared their insights and experiences so candidly.

I hope this study gives voice to your aspirations as earners and carers in a new era of responsibility and expectation. You are pioneers- brave in your quest to find a better way to be the fullest version of yourselves as workers and as parents.

This generation of kids is in safe hands.

AND

To Margaret Dass-Ernst.

A light to all, a compass to many, beloved by me.

My work is your work.

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Table of Contents

Declaration iv

Acknowledgements vi

List of Tables 12

List of Figures 14

List of Acronyms 15

Chapter 1 Introduction 16

Fathers, Work, and Care 16

The Researcher's Position 18

Women, Work, and Care: The Current State 21

The Gender, Work, and Care Nexus 24

Why this Research is Important 33

Thesis Outline 35

Chapter 2 Fathers, Work, and Care 38

Paid Parental Leave in Australia 38

Historical Context of Paid Parental Leave in Australia 45

Paternal Access to Paid Parental Leave in Australia 50

Paternal Use of Paid Parental Leave in Australia 53

Family-Friendly Work Provisions: Flexible Work Practices 55

Chapter Summary *59*

Chapter 3 International Policy Analysis **61**

International Paid Parental Leave Policy *61*

Paid Parental Leave in the OECD *62*

PPL and Gender Equality *67*

Known Barriers to Primary Care for Fathers *74*

Additional Research Areas Needed *91*

Chapter Summary *93*

Chapter 4 Theory **96**

What is Theory? *96*

Pierre Bourdieu: Theory of Practice *100*

Gender Mainstreaming – Teresa Rees *110*

Chapter Summary *117*

Chapter 5 Methodology **119**

The Role of the Worldview in Research *120*

The Pragmatic World View *124*

Research Questions: An Assessment *129*

Research Design and Purpose in MMR *133*

Research Design Features *134*

Procedure *139*

Research Design Critique *149*

Research Ethics *156*

Chapter Summary *160*

Chapter 6 Results **161**

Fathers' Attitudes and Beliefs on Work and Care *161*

Ideal Policy Conditions for Fathers *163*

Fathers' Participation in Leave and Caregiving *176*

Primary Care Arrangements in the Preschool Years *185*

Workplace Barriers (Beyond PPL) *203*

Chapter Summary *213*

Chapter 7 Discussion **215**

Main Findings *217*

Theoretical Accounts of the Data *224*

Conclusions *233*

Chapter 8 The Road Ahead: Recommendations and Future Research **235**

Employers *236*

Government and Statutory Agencies *239*

Limitations and Future Research *243*

Chapter Summary *244*

References **246**

Appendix 1: Flow Chart of Recruitment Process 282

Appendix 2: The Survey 283

Appendix 3: Interview Questions 360

Appendix 4: Recruitment Correspondence (Employer Letter) 361

Appendix 5: Key Demographics of the Couple Interview Sample 362

Appendix 6: Logistic Regression Outputs for Primary Care Over Time 365

Appendix 7: Ethics Approval 366

Appendix 8: Calculated Confidence Intervals of Necessary Conditions 367

List of Tables

Table 1: Exemplar Nations for Father-Friendly Paid Parental Leave Policy 82

Table 2: The Four Main World Views for Social Research 125

Table 3: The Five-step Design Process for MMR 133

Table 4: Table of Reasons for Adopting a MMR Design 136

Table 5: Sample Employers 140

Table 6: Organisation Type 153

Table 7: Respondent Numbers by Employer 153

Table 8: Likelihood of Taking the Leave: Rate of Pay (self/partner) 165

Table 9: Odds Ratio Calculations: Leave Against Rates of Compensation 166

Table 10: Necessary PPL Conditions for Taking the Leave 169

Table 11: Confidence Intervals (Necessary Conditions for Leave) 170

Table 12: Fathers' Leave for Care 180

Table 13: Work Adjustments to Accommodate Care 181

Table 14: Main Reasons for Denial of Flexible Work Requests 183

Table 15: Primary Care Arrangements Across Time 186

Table 16: Frequency and Percentage of Sample's Primary Care Arrangements 187

Table 17: Pattern of Primary Care by Hours of Care 188

Table 18: Three Strongest Drivers of Primary Care Decision Making over Time (self/partner) 191

Table 19: Strongest vs. Weakest Drivers of Primary Care Over Time 192

List of Figures

Figure 1: The Social Context of Primary Care Decision-Making: A Vicious Cycle 24

Figure 2: Critical Policy and Legislative Changes to Paid Parental Leave 1907-2012 47

Figure 3: Gender Equality Index of PPL Policies in Selected High-Income Economies 85

Figure 4: Total and Full Time Equivalent (FTE) PPL for Two-Parent Families 86

Figure 5: Gender Equality Index 87

Figure 6: The Theoretical World and the Real World 98

Figure 7: Relationships Between the Key Pillars of this Study 102

Figure 8: The Process of Research Design 121

Figure 9: Research Design Process 123

Figure 10: Percent of Fathers and Partners by Qualification (n=951) 154

Figure 11: Plotted Confidence Intervals: Necessary Condition for Fathers 171

Figure 12: Number of Fathers' Ideal Duration of Leave by Rate of Pay 173

Figure 13: Percentages of Sample Reporting Withdrawal Preferences 175

Figure 14: Proportion of Sample Reporting Primary Care in their Working Life 177

List of Acronyms

Acronym	Expansion
ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
ACTU	Australian Council of Trade Unions
AHRC	Australian Human Rights Commission
APC	Australia Productivity Commission
BaMS	Baseline Mothers Survey
DaPP	Dad and Partner Pay
FW Act (2009)	*Fair Work Act (2009)*
FWO	Fair Work Ombudsman
HILDA	Household Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia Survey
NATSEM	National Centre for Social and Economic Modelling
MMR	Mixed Methods Research
NES	New Employment Standards
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PPL	Paid Parental Leave
WAD	Workplace Agreements Database
WGEA	Workplace Gender Equality Agency

Chapter 1 Introduction

This chapter introduces the main topic of the thesis – fathers, work, and care. It begins with a detailed overview of the main issues under investigation including the absence of fathers from primary caregiving and the potential links with broader gender inequality. This serves as the backdrop for the study. This chapter then explores the stated aims of the research and its rationale as an original and independent exploration of paid work and care in Australia. It exposes the relative lack of understanding of these issues from working fathers' perspectives and locates the personal and professional experiences that have led to the pursuit of the present study.

Fathers, Work, and Care

The distribution of paid work and caregiving amongst parents has long been associated with broader gender equality outcomes, particularly relating to women's workforce participation and its human capital benefits (Adema & Whiteford 2007; Australian Human Rights Commission [AHRC] 2009). Traditionally, the research in this sphere has centred on mothers, with a focus on understanding the relationship between their primary caregiving and its associated and incremental disadvantages over the life course. However, there is a paucity of research on paternal caregiving in this context. We know comparatively little about fathers and why they seldom participate as a primary carer even when paid leave for such care is available. The literature has suggested father care has several benefits for both the family and the workplace. Not the least, is a more equal (though not yet symmetrical) distribution of paid work and care amongst couples. This factor brings Paid Parental Leave (PPL) into the spotlight as a critical platform for realising several gender equality gains. Fathers, however, have been shown to refrain from taking available leave for primary care, and this in and of itself, presents a curious social, economic, and political quandary worthy of review.

Against this backdrop, the benefits of paternal caregiving for children is becoming more apparent in both social and scientific research. However, the factors that drive the leave-taking necessary to provide such care remains contested. This issue has been all but unexamined in the Australian context though is well covered in international research. This has shown fathers are keen to provide care for their children but only under specific circumstances. Whilst some research shows Australian fathers are likely to share an enthusiasm for caregiving with their international counterparts, it is unclear what level of caregiving Australian fathers aspire to achieve. Questions remain as to whether their interest extends to primary caregiving and importantly, the barriers and enablers to fulfilling their desired levels of care for their children. At present fathers may wish to provide primary care but few fathers do. Researchers and policy makers in Australia remain unclear if this is a matter of fathers opting out of primary caregiving or if they are indeed locked out.

The present study directly responds to these knowledge gaps. It asks:

What do fathers identify as the key factors that enhance or inhibit their primary care of children?

As the literature review will reveal, there are four areas of knowledge that will inform a meaningful response to the central thesis question. These include understanding fathers':

- Attitudes and beliefs regarding work and caregiving.
- Current practices regarding leave taking and work-related adjustments for care of preschool children.
- Ideal care arrangements and policy conditions necessary for taking up a primary caregiver role.
- Explanation of differences between their ideal and actual caregiving arrangements.

The above understandings are all but impossible to consider in isolation from the universal datum showing women continue to bear the responsibility for caregiving in most contemporary families and at significant social and economic costs (Adema & Whiteford 2007; AHRC 2009; Baxter 2013c; Johnson et al. 2013). This means at the very heart of the present study is the desire to understand the paternal perspective on primary caregiving decisions amongst couples to recalibrate the way paid work and care

is distributed amongst couples and in the process, progress gender equality at the policy, workplace, and individual level.

The Researcher's Position

The impetus for the present research is best described as a personal and professional curiosity.

I was raised in what most would consider less than ideal socio-economic circumstances. One of three daughters, from an unskilled, uneducated migrant family, my parents were indeed the epitome of the working poor, and I experienced all the expected childhood prejudice and shame associated with this. Whilst undertaking what would now be considered a 'work for the dole scheme', my father was given the opportunity to attend a subsidised night school, and after attending six years of night school, gained an engineering qualification. This inevitably led to an improved set of economic and therefore social circumstances. It was my natural assumption from observing this shifting fortune that education would indeed be my way out of poverty and social exclusion.

This assumption was affirmed as I managed to complete tertiary education and experienced a rapid rise in a corporate career with the sound economic circumstances and independence that came with it. Given the importance of employment in my circumstances it was perhaps inevitable that I chose to specialise in Human Resources and Industrial Relations, Diversity, and Inclusion. The dignity of professional work was something I held dear.

I was, what I would call, a late comer to feminism, having experienced social exclusion not due to my gender but instead to my socioeconomic background. That was of course until I got married and had a child of my own. From there it was somewhat like being 'pecked to death by a duck', and I felt as if I was indeed right back where I started; square one. I was alone, at home, with no money of my own, and life dictated once again by significantly reduced earnings.

To save money on one wage we moved to a regional town, which was a two-hour commute from work for both myself and my partner and so I became the stay-at-home parent. It was at this point that I came to wonder what decisions had brought me to this point. I had seen many women lead stellar corporate

careers only to have babies and then either return to work within six months (with a nanny looking after the children), or often fade off into the distance. This was especially the case with those that chose second and subsequent births. There were it seemed just two paths to choose upon having a child in the corporate world. Which camp was I to be in I wondered?

Although there were women in my pre-birth workplaces that made gallant attempts to work part time after birth or even job share, in hindsight I could now see that they inevitably ended up in the positions that were below their pre-birth rank. This was not always reflected in the organisational chart, but certainly in terms of clout and influence over the direction of their business units and the organisation overall. Part-time workers were not key influencers.

Important to note was the fact that we had not planned it this way for our family. I was initially quite adamant I would not be taking the 'hit' to my career by being a long time stay-at-home parent and at the time I earned slightly more than my partner, so it made practical sense to have my partner at home and me to return to work. If I was honest it made the most emotional sense as well because my job had come to be so connected with my place in the world, security, and acceptance. The role switches we envisaged never occurred however. Eight weeks prior to birth my partner decided he 'couldn't' do it with an infant and was 'scared'. Primary caregiving was firmly thrust back in my inbox and I soon got the sense (and what the evidence here and beyond would suggest is a very correct one) that caregiving was not going to be a shared responsibility at all, but *my* responsibility, that at best, I could 'pass' on to someone else to 'help' me with. What was it that made me the default carer?

I totally understood all the reasons my partner might decline to leave a job he enjoyed to become the stay-at-home parent. I shared the same reservations. But I was not comfortable with the position his 'no thanks' placed me in. I did not feel I had much choice at all when I had worked so hard to give myself exactly that. Choice and freedom. So, I started a list. A list of all the men that I knew that had babies in my time at this workplace. The list was long. Thirty-three men in fact that I could remember became first time fathers over a five-year period.

Now I was not sure how many women had made the transition to parenthood during that time but I do remember contributing to many more than 33 gifts and attending countless more morning teas. I never saw many of these wonderful, bright, educated women in the workplace again. It dawned on me that I could not recall ever having one morning tea for the guys, yet, they too were becoming parents. Now I had a child of my own I knew more than ever now that every man on that list had had their lives changed dramatically too, as they transitioned to working parenthood. Yet there was no card or gift and no long-term leave, part-time jobs, nor return-to-work program associated with them.

As a leader in Diversity and Inclusion, at least for some of that period, I felt I had let half of the working parents in our 10,000-strong workforce down. I felt a mixture of guilt and now burning curiosity. On the personal front, my husband and I were in the perfect position to share care of our daughter. We believed in gender equality in principle. We had relatively equal earnings and, working for big corporates, we had access to several appropriate levels of leave. Yet it did not happen. Was that a choice? If so, how did it occur? On a professional level, I also wondered how it was that I missed this startling revelation and expression of gender inequality in the workplace by not putting in the systems and processes that acknowledged the transition to working parenthood for fathers. I wondered how these two aspects – the home and workplace – were connected in caregiving decisions and especially from the fathers' perspective. To me it was beginning to look much like they could opt out of caregiving, but did they? How many other organisations treated their people in the same manner? How did this impact the decisions couples made about sharing care? Were we the only couple that wanted to share care but could not seem to break through what seemed like an invisible force that appeared to compel me to own caregiving and my husband earning?

Whilst this is not in itself presented as a feminist research project, it is part of what I would consider a broadly feminist undertaking because it is borne from the age old feminist understanding, first coined in the 1960's by Carol Hanisch (2006), that the 'personal had become the political', and I for the first time came to understand first hand that in many cases the two were inextricably linked.

This project then, began with a list that seeded an idea that maybe we were missing something as researchers and champions of gender equality. It is against this background and the current state of women outlined below that I sought to uncover if and how we could change existing practices in the distribution of work and care and their related gender equality outcomes.

Women, Work, and Care: The Current State

A little over a decade ago, the then treasurer of Australia, Peter Costello, rather controversially argued that women in Australia enjoyed an exemplary level of freedom and autonomy, boasting that Australian levels of equality for women was a defining feature of our culture (Randell-Moon 2007). He was, at the time making a comparison with those nations observing Sharia law. On that occasion, and within the confines of the comparison, he may have well have been correct, however, Australia is hardly a women's world.

Whilst Australian women are amongst the most educated in the world their participation in paid work (and particularly after child birth) remains relatively low in comparison to other nations within the Organisation for Economic Coordination and Development (OECD) cohort. Whilst female employment has increased overall since 2008, rates are low in relation to other OECD nations and are particularly poor for women with young children. Mothers still work predominantly part time in Australia (with family care reasons cited as the main driver) (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development [OECD] 2017).

For those women who choose to participate in paid work they still face, amongst other things, significant and enduring pay disparity. At present, women in Australia earn 23.1% less than men for full-time comparable work. This inequality is even more severe when part-time and casual earnings are considered (Workplace Gender Equality Agency [WGEA] 2014). Women are also more likely than men to work under minimal wage conditions and in lower status, part-time, and casual roles. Over 22% of all working women will be sexually harassed during their working life (AHRC 2012), an experience that alarmingly, appears to begin in primary school (Alloway 2000). They also face significant levels of discrimination in the workplace because of pregnancy and related leave despite explicit laws that

prohibit this (AHRC 2014). After a lifetime of work, both in and outside the home, women retire with less than half the superannuation of men and are far more likely than men to live in poverty at all stages of life (Featherstone 2009). They are more likely to be victims of sexual assault and domestic violence (AHRC 2010, 2012, Connelly & Harms 2009) and remain under-represented in decision-making capacities in Australia. They comprise less than 30% of the Federal House of Representatives, 17% of CEOs and 25% of board directors (WGEA 2017). The truth is, on all but a few social indicators (such as longevity for example), Australia remains a man's world.

Both theoretically and empirically the gender disparities noted above have been associated with women's disproportionate level of care giving responsibilities compared to men (Browne 2007; Christie 2000; Craig 2006; Esping-Anderson 2009; Featherstone 2009; Hewitt et al. 2010; OECD 2011; Pascall 1997; Sainsbury 1999; Stueve & Pleck 2003). The literature suggests the relationship between gender and equality is mediated through a complex process centred on women's (lost) opportunities for paid work compared to men due to their reproductive capacities and more so, the subsequent care giving responsibilities post-birth (AHRC 2010; Craig 2007; Manne 2008). The literature consistently highlights the most essential difference between the life course trajectory of men and women over and above birth and breastfeeding is the fact that women continue to mould their lives around the care needs of others whilst men shape their lives around work and economic gain. This status quo means women earn, progress, and participate in society far less than men overall (Summers 2011). Thus, the prediction that as women entered the paid work force, the gendered disparities in domestic labour (including childcare) would level out, has not, as it seems, been realised (Craig 2011).

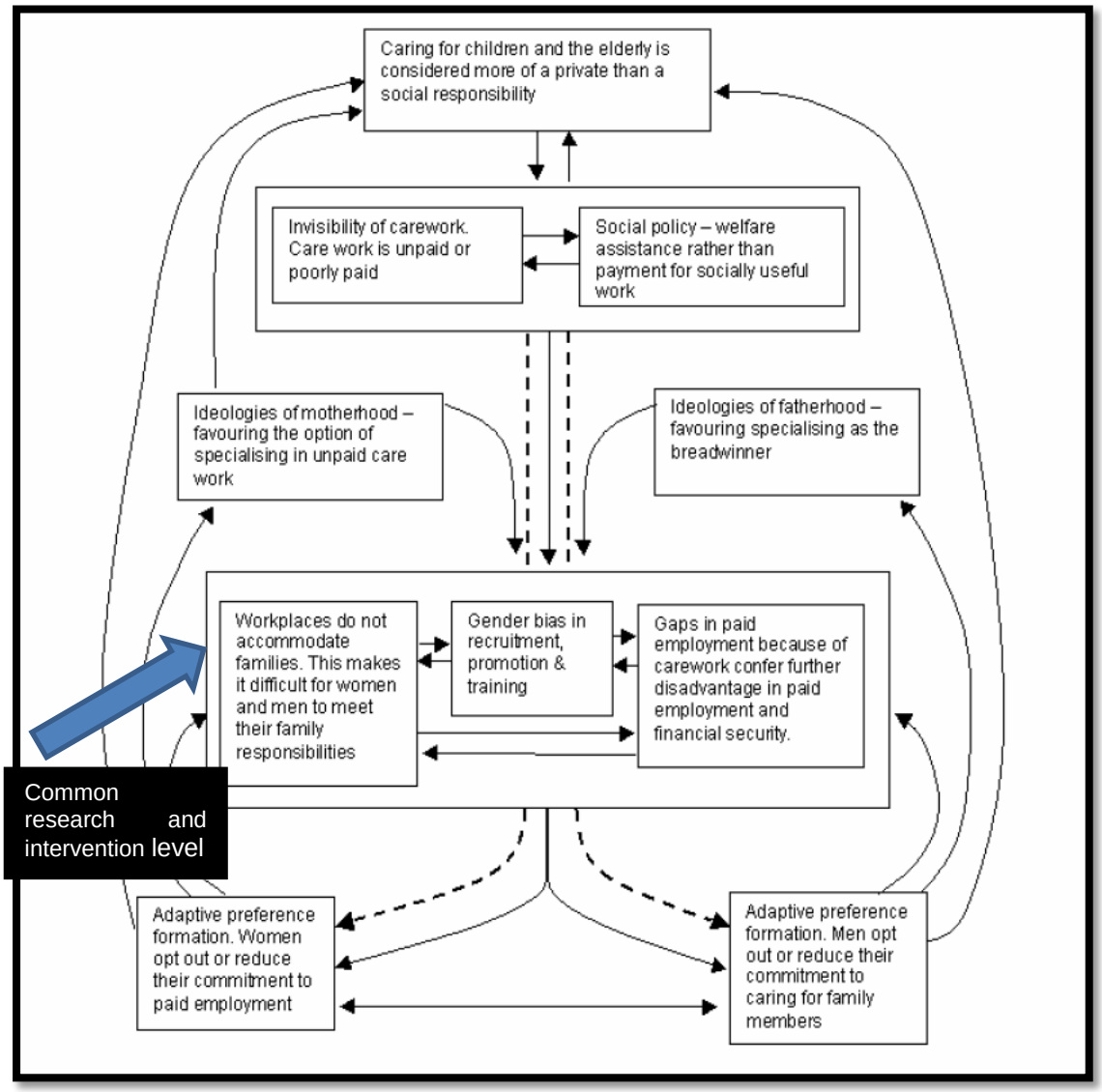
The workplace is a stark reminder of the interdependent limitations of gender and practice. At present, almost 60% of all women for example participate in some form of paid labour in Australia, yet over 97% of mothers report they are the 'primary carers of children'[1], and unlike men, paid work provides no buffer from the burden of primary care responsibility for either children or the unpaid domestic work in the

1 Primary caring in this sense was defined as the parent who was considered by both parents as the most knowledgeable person about the child. It is assumed this has been developed as a result of spending the most time with the child (Zubrick et al. 2008, p. 12).

home (AHRC 2014). The more women are entrenched in care activities, the less opportunities they have for market work and its associated economic gains. In turn, the lack of economic gain and experience means women are less likely to make inroads in the workplace at the same level as men and more likely to remain entrenched in the unpaid caregiving role. The fact is men and women have very different practices when it comes to work and care. It has often been assumed that these are grounded in preferences or aptitudes (see for example Catherine Hakim's Preference Theory). The reality is practices emerge from a complex array of influences. Decisions are made in a broader social context that provides reinforcement and reflection of certain practice, based on predetermined gender lines (Leahy & Doughney 2006).

One version of this cycle that is instructive for the present analysis is presented overleaf in the Figure 1. It highlights the broader context in which decision making occurs and highlights how work and care decisions are likely to move far beyond the notion of preferences alone (Leahy & Doughney 2006). It would appear that much of the research and intervention work on de-gendering work and care has been pitched only at the level of preferences and therefore policy change. An underlying assumption of much of this work is that opening a level playing field at the policy level opens more choices. Therefore, people are free to choose differently. The persistence of women's disadvantage suggest that this approach has not been wholly successful and has done little to alter the gendered contract of work and care. As the diagram highlights, an un-interrogated assumption of this approach assumes people have a freedom to choose in the first place and all but ignores the myriad of other inter-dependent factors that may have an impact on family level choices such as primary care decision-making. Fathers have all but been ignored in these contexts in caregiving and may themselves be trapped on a different side of what Leahy and Doughney have termed as a vicious cycle (Leahy & Doughney 2006, p. 41).

Figure 1: The Social Context of Primary Care Decision-Making: A Vicious Cycle



Source: Leahy and Doughney (2006, p. 41).

The Gender, Work, and Care Nexus

Overall men and women in Australia spend roughly the same amount of time 'working' – 77 and 79 hours per week respectively (Hewitt et al. 2010), however, women continue to do the lion's share of unpaid work in the home. This pattern continues even when the woman is engaged in comparable hours of paid work to their male partner (Perales, Baxter & Tai 2015).

Data from the Household Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia (HILDA, Wave 6) finds that women in full-time work with dependent children spent on average 15 hours a week on home duties (housework and household errands) compared to men who spent only six hours per week (Cassells et al. 2009). Disparities amongst women who work part time are even greater. Men with dependents who work part time (on average 22 hours a week) do only 15 hours of home duties compared to women with dependents who work part time (on average 20 hours a week), but do 26 hours of home duties (Cassells et al. 2009, p. 13). In this sense, part-time working women with dependents do two hours less paid work, but do 11 hours more house work than their male counterparts. Men do the same amount of housework as full-time working women when they work part time (22 hours a week).

Data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) supports this understanding. The Australian Social Trends series managed by the ABS, reports that women still do over two-thirds the household work of men. In 2006, for example, men did an average of 31.5 hours of paid work and 15.85 hours of household work (excluding childcare) such as shopping, cleaning, and laundry. Women spent 16.27 hours in paid work but 26.9 hours per week on housework (ABS 2006). Similar to the HILDA data, the ABS analysis demonstrates the proportion of paid and unpaid work between genders varies considerably and the impact of paid work operates differentially on the hours contributed.

The above data strongly suggests that regardless of women's paid hours of work they take on almost twice as much housework as men (ABS 2009). These disparities in housework contributions are replicated and supported across numerous studies in Australia (Baxter et al. 2007; Craig 2002, 2006, 2007; Hewitt et al. 2010; Zubrick et al. 2008) and differences are comparable with patterns found overseas (Esping-Anderson 2009; OECD 2011). Whilst the overall disparities of hours spent doing housework between men and women reduce over time (and particularly as children get older), it is not because men are doing more, but simply because women are doing less in terms of housework (Craig 2006). Interestingly however, this is not the case when it comes to childcare.

The gender divide in unpaid housework is both replicated and disproportionately increased when childcare is considered in the measure. The gap is almost double that of housework alone (Hewitt et al.

2010). The National Centre for Social and Economic Modelling (NATSEM) data (Cassells et al. 2009) shows women with dependents who work full time do 13 hours of childcare per week and full-time working men do an average of 10 hours per week. The greater gender disparity examined between part-time workers on housework activity continues with childcare measures. For women who work part time, for example, despite working on average just two hours less per week, they do nine more hours of childcare than their male counterparts. Again, the ABS data identifies a similar pattern to the NATSEM figures. Women are reported to spend on average twice as much time as fathers caring for children either as primary carers or in child related caring activities (ABS 2009) regardless of their work status. This gendered pattern of work and childcare has also been confirmed by numerous other local studies (Baxter et al. 2007; Craig 2002, 2006, 2007; Craig & Baxter 2016; Hewitt et al. 2010; Zubrick et al. 2008) and international reports (Esping-Anderson 2009; OECD, 2011, 2012).

Taken together, women have not fared well on the home front under the one and half earner model that dominates Australian families today (Pocock 2003). Women with dependent children who seek to combine paid work and motherhood work the longest hours of all groups when home duties and childcare is considered. This includes both single men and women, full- and part-time workers as well as those outside the labour market (Cassells et al. 2009; Craig et al. 2008). Not surprisingly this group also express the highest levels of work and family strain (Losoncz 2011). The notion of the 'second shift' which dominated the work and family debate in the early 90s (Hochschild 1989) has yet to be resolved. It remains particularly pressing for contemporary mothers with young children who seek to combine paid work and care of children.

The Motherhood Penalty

Gender aggregated data on work and care strongly suggest that having children increases the level of unpaid work mothers do and reduces their participation in paid work (Baxter 2013a; Farrelly & Whitehouse 2013). Children do not have a corresponding effect on fathers and the direct costs to women because of their earner/carer role over the life course are not trivial. The impact is most obviously reflected in women's lower economic gain over the life course (AHRC 2010). Analysis of the

HILDA data (Wave 6) has also yielded some interesting results that support the notion of a motherhood penalty (Cassells et al. 2009). For example, an intact couple in Australia with dependent children has an overall average net worth of $367,230. Lone female parents fare the worst on net worth measures particularly in comparison to other women. Lone males with children amass over 85% of the net wealth of an intact couple with children ($298,160), with lone mothers gaining only 55% in comparison ($191,300). Most telling perhaps is the fact that women without children fare the best overall on net worth measures, accumulating $195,840 more than their maternal counterparts and a slightly higher rate of wealth compared to childless males. In both cases the impact of having children is most marked for women.

Much of the economic disparity between men and women, and mothers and fathers are particularly evident at retirement. Men for example have 1.7 times the amount of disposable income of women upon retirement. Women are far more likely than men to rely on the old age pension in retirement – retiring with around half the superannuation of men (AHRC 2009; Cassells et al. 2009). This is not surprising given women earn significantly less than men over their life course. Tertiary-educated women with postgraduate qualifications for example are projected to earn two thirds of their male counterpart's earnings – mainly due to the negative impact of children on women's earnings. This has a corresponding positive affect on fathers (Cassells et al. 2012). In some studies, children have been found to have a positive impact on men's incomes (Hersch & Stratton 2000; Peterson, Penner & Hogsnes 2007). Men with children out earn all other groups including single childless men on personal income measures alone (Cassells et al. 2012; Cassells, et al. 2009). The converse is true for women however with mothers earning the least of all earning groups even when education and occupation are equal (Cassells, et al. 2009).

The financial differences between men and women over the life course are marked and have been inextricably linked to women's differential and transient labour force participation due to caregiving. The gender disparity examined between mothers and fathers in terms of unpaid labour is replicated in patterns of paid work and importantly for this study work-related leave taking post-birth. But it is not just time away from work that explains these outcomes. The motherhood penalty moves beyond actual

hours and earning related to paid work on return, but also paid work and career patterns after birth (Lalive & Zweimüller 2005; Soloff & Whitehouse 2005; Whitehouse, Diamond & Baird 2007).

Much of the early gender work and care research initially focussed on measures of forgone earnings over the life course because of withdrawal from the market for care. Within this realm much has also been made of women's long-term patterns of part-time work (Cassells et al. 2012; Masterman-Smith & Pocock 2008; Pocock 2005) to explain differential earning over the life course. Although women's workforce participation is increasing in Australia, women account for over 70% of part-time workers (Pocock & Skinner 2014; WGEA 2017) whilst men continue to dominate the full-time positions. Naturally this has contributed to differences in lifetime earnings. Recent research focus however has turned to interrogation of what occurs for women (but neither men nor childless women) when they return to work and transition to working parenthood. This shift has been largely in response to attempts to explain a consistent gender pay gap in all OECD nations despite laws which prohibit it. The evidence from international studies on this effect points to a persistent wage penalty for most mothers in the workplace – particularly when they return to work from parental leave or maternity-based sabbaticals (Baker 2011; Benard, Paik & Correll 2008; Correll, Bernard & Paik 2007; Livermore 2010; Peterson, Penner & Hogsnes 2007).

The Australia Institute, for example, released a report highlighting the long-term impact of maternity leave in terms of women's hourly pay. Baker (2011) reports women who return to work from maternity leave face wage penalties for up to three years after their return to work. In the first year after women's return to work women were found to experience a 4% wage penalty, a 9% decrease the following year, and in the third year this spikes at 11% compared to male cohorts. This supports a previous Australian study on penalty effects for mothers from Edwards (2006) who found negative wage differentials for women in Australia of up to 13.7%. Importantly, this applied to women whether they took maternity leave or not and was estimated to be worth $1.12 billion (Edwards 2006). It is worthy of note that this is significantly more than the initial projected costs of the current Australia's statutory PPL scheme (Australian Productivity Commission [APC] 2009).

Livermore (2010) has also found unexplained wage penalties for mothers of between 5-10% that rose with each child. Unlike Baker's study, however, this was not found to have an immediate impact on wages upon return to work but appears to manifest itself as a reduced wage growth over subsequent years in comparison to non-mothers (Livermore 2010). This supports findings from previous studies on maternity leave and wage differentials internationally (Benard, Paik & Correll 2008; Correll, Bernard & Paik 2007; Peterson, Penner & Hogsnes 2007).

Taken together these studies highlight the explicit and implicit costs of being a working mother. In some cases, this manifests as a wage differential for specific groups of mothers (for example Baker found results were particularly related to those mothers who returned to work at the same employer and same hours). These also occur in the form of direct, forgone earnings and via reductions in rates of pay for working mothers and specifically upon to return to work from maternity sabbatical. There is evidence that this might also occur even prior to leave and independent of maternity leave take up (Edwards 2006). Thus, the motherhood penalty may indeed be a broader gender penalty based on the assumption that women are all potential mothers. This penalty contributes to, if not explains, the persistent gender pay gap in Australia. The wage-based penalties imposed on women in general and more specifically when they have children, demonstrate that women have indeed been paying it forward. What is provided so 'generously' in maternity leave, for example, is more than paid for by women through their depressed pay rate overall and the wage differentials they experience when they return from maternity leave. This represents another gender-specific cost to women because of the unequal distribution of work and care amongst mothers and fathers.

Whilst the motherhood penalty has been somewhat established in current research, its mechanisms however are less settled. There is some evidence that the penalty is a result of 'cognitive bias' associated with two factors in particular – negative attributions towards part-time workers (which are overwhelmingly women) and, perhaps a related but general perception, that women are less committed to their career in deference, if not preference, for 'caregiving' (Bernard, Paik & Correll 2008). Interestingly however, there is no reliable evidence that women are either less committed to their careers or less competent in the execution of their job roles prior to or upon return from maternity leave.

In other words, women who work part time or take a maternity sabbatical do not necessarily perform less well in their job but they are penalised nonetheless. What might amplify these effects, according to some studies, is the contrast with a reward bestowed on men upon transitioning to working parenthood.

Correll, Bernard and Paik (2007) for example noted a fatherhood premium in their research into the motherhood penalty. They argued heightened wages for new fathers reflects an 'ideal worker' norm as well as a cultural expectation of need that was found to drive overall wage differentials. In short, workers without caregiving responsibility (who by extension are most men in the workplace) are presumed to be of more value to the organisation due to their availability to the organisation for more intense work. This is then reflected in their remuneration. There is also the suggestion that the 'living wage' for men may also be at play (Bernard, Paik & Correll 2008). This concept was enshrined in Australia via the Harvester Judgment in 1907. This case consolidated a 'decent wage' for men based on a presumption that men's pay would need to support a wife and three children (Brennan 2009). What this appears to have unwittingly achieved however, is embedding an accepted pay differential between men and women based on men's historical role as the primary bread winner. Thus, it is a worker's potential for productivity (the converse of production being reproduction) that is instrumental to estimation of value in the workplace (Baird 2004).

Interestingly, there is some emerging evidence that at least some of this penalty is applied to fathers when they take care leave (Rege & Solli 2013).

Several studies from the international arena show some robust effects of fatherhood penalties when care leave is taken. Johansson (2010) looked at this issue using Norwegian data on fathers who had taken their full quota following the 1993 reforms that segregated leave specifically for the father. They found a reduction in long-term earnings for those fathers who had taken up the full quota of leave. Whilst several of the findings failed to reach statistical significance, the researcher did find small but significant earnings differentials following leave for fathers. Another study seeking to replicate these initial findings found no effects however after taking leave (Cools, Fiva & Kirkebøen 2015).

One final study sought to clarify the discrepancy across studies with specific reference to the financial effects of paternity leave. They further sought to address several of the methodological issues of the previous investigations, namely that point-in-time data was taken just before and just after the change in Norwegian policy and did not leave enough time to measure the longer-term effects. Rege and Solli (2013) utilised longitudinal data and measured future earnings of care-leave fathers until the child was five years of age. The researchers did find significant long-term effects for fathers who took the full four weeks of leave compared to fathers who did not take the leave. This accounted for an average 2.2% reduction in earnings until the child was aged five. Interestingly however, these were found to correlate with reductions in market work and thus a direct penalty and different to the penalty applied to mothers, which has both direct effects (as result of time away from the market) and likely some cognitive bias associated with perceived value and measure against the ideal, full-time worker model (Rege & Solli 2013).

The current research on the penalties faced by fathers for taking leave show similar issues to the broader empirical comparisons on parental leave in that there is significant conflation of measures across the various leave types and their intent. For example, the above studies deal with true paternity leave that is concurrent leave *with* the mother, and not the main variable of interest in the present thesis (primary care leave) nor the main point of difference in terms of leave taking between fathers and mothers. Nonetheless, the above findings also suggest that fathers can also face penalties in the workplace for caregiving and this may not be mediated entirely by gender. Several studies cite men's fear of experiencing workplace penalties (both concrete and perceived) that is normally attributable and attributed to working mothers (Benard, Paik & Correll 2008; Haas & Hwang 2009; Harrington, Van Deusen & Humberd 2011; Russell & O'Leary 2012).

There is some evidence that men appear to be reinforced and valorised as the primary breadwinner through the direct rewards associated with full-time working fatherhood, but are inhibited from stepping outside of this norm under the veiled threat that the sanctions and bias normally associated with working mothers will also be applied to them. As the primary breadwinners in most families, any direct effects on wages and financial rewards noted above would also need to be considered as a disincentive to

caregiving, and overall serve as a reminder of how undervalued care work is in the workplace and the implications it has for gender and future market work. Caregiving is at best undervalued in the workplace, if not explicitly penalised. Whilst ever caregiving defaults to one gender alone, it remains a major stumbling block for the gender equality project and remains in a self-reinforcing loop of inequality.

Much of the international literature on PPL considered in the next chapter further affirms the above conclusions and brings us to the central premise of this thesis. If women face penalties in the workplace, partly through their greater leave taking and partly it seems as a result of cognitive bias relating to this and the ideal worker norms it fosters, do men engage in lower rates of caregiving (and the taking of care-related leave) because they are less personally interested in care giving in preference for market work or, are some other more structural factors hindering such participation? What we presently understand is that gender inequality persists in Australia and this is detrimental to women's quality of life compared to men. Pay differences exist from the outset of women's entry into the workforce and expand over the course of her career. Negative stereotypes in terms of motherhood, care, and value in market work persist in employment and these are juxtaposed by a 'fatherhood premium' in the workplace that relates to historical valorisation as breadwinner for the family and ideal worker norms. Together these result in lost earnings and lost opportunities for women in employment compared to men. Over the life course, these set women on a trajectory of accumulating loss, yet these very same factors help to establish men on a life course of increasing gain. In addition, workforce participation does not protect nor preclude women from caring and cleaning in the same ways it seems to do for men. For example, when men provide care they do less market work and vice versa. The same exchange is not apparent for women.

From this standpoint, a highly gendered and unequal life course experience emerges particularly for mothers. Women's financial, social, and political participation continue to be highly influenced if not defined by birth and their caregiving role and responsibilities. This is in stark contrast to men and childless women. In terms of fathers, birth and care appear empirically at least as little more than a blip on the radar beyond any impact during the early post-partum period. There is little corresponding change in fathers' overall employment participation or reward, social position, or leisure in the longer

term despite fathering the exact same number of children as their maternal counterparts. Men with children continue to increase their earnings, gather valuable work experience, participate in premium employment opportunities and other activities at their pre-birth levels and importantly do so largely un-encumbered in any significant or practical sense by the fetters of care for dependents. The costs of birth and care remain almost exclusively women's and these costs are both well documented and replicated in the work and care literature. Further, understandings on why the decades of law and social policy change has done little to ameliorate the gender disparity noted above is contested. By interrogating fathers' positions and experiences in work and caregiving, we can progress understanding and amelioration of these issues. This forms the premise for the current study.

Why this Research is Important

Filling the Knowledge Gap

With the reconciliation of care for dependent children and paid employment continuing to be a stumbling block for many parents and gender equality in general, understanding how a more equal distribution of work and care might emerge is a critical endeavour. Entry to parenthood is where we see most couples default to gender specialisation, even if this was not what they intended; with men adopting the role of primary breadwinner and women adopting the role of primary caregiver. The latter often entails the addition of part-time labour force participation for women and importantly a long term, if not lifetime, sabbatical from full-time work and all its social and economic capital benefits (Esping-Anderson 2009). The literature, at least internationally, paints a picture of contemporary parents intending to share care of their children, but by the time the child is in school, they become well embedded in the one and half earner model of the family, where primary care responsibility rests firmly with the mother. In Australia, we have no sense of how fathers consider this, what might look like an ideal outcome for contemporary couples, and why fathers appear to be consistently absent from primary caregiving despite some evidence that they are keen to participate in this care.

Measuring the 'Right' Thing

Whilst balancing caregiving and work has a strong research history in Australia, it is unequivocally from the perspective of mothers. When fathers have been included in the research endeavour, this has centred on the uptake of flexible work practices, short duration paternity leave, or alternatively, the experiences of a small, albeit growing, contingent of stay-at-home fathers (Russell 1982; Russell & Bowman 2000; Russell, James & Watson 1988; Seward, Yeatts & Zottarelli 2002). Whilst these investigations can be highly informative, they do not adequately reveal the broader structures and interdependence of the gender contract at work with that developing at home (Almqvist, Sandberg & Dahlgren 2011; Esping-Anderson 2009). The investigation of primary caregiving is particularly important from a gender-equality perspective, because it is primary care responsibility for a longer duration of leave (beyond two weeks paternity leave with the mother), that is arguably, the greater influence on gender equality over the longer term (Huerta et al. 2013; O'Brien 2013). Further, whilst flexible work practices are more commonly examined in the literature and do prove helpful in assisting with managing work and care (Craig & Powell 2012), few of these practices alter the primary care dynamics within the family or the expectations of primary caregiver roles at work. This is perhaps understandable because at present, fathers tend to use only those flexible work practices that sit at the periphery of primary caregiving, such as changing start and finish times, or taking ad-hoc leave to tend to sick children (Pocock & Skinner 2014). Fathers' uptake of flexible work practices such as job share, part-time work, or compressed workweeks would assist the redistribution of primary care amongst partners remain exceptional. Importantly, from a gender-equality viewpoint, this remains the hallmark practice of working mothers (Baxter 2013a; Pocock & Skinner 2014).

Addressing the 'Right' Questions to the Right Group

The majority of fathers with young children are the primary breadwinners in their families in Australia (Baxter 2013b). This makes primary care decisions particularly constrained for what is, demographically speaking, the biggest proportion of the 'family' population and a major segment of the employment

market in Australia (ABS 2012). In addition, the investigations of stay-at-home fathers have shown that the shift in primary care responsibility in these families is more likely to arise from an intervening event such as a redundancy or illness for example, or in the majority of cases, the fact that the other partner is already the higher earner. These factors strongly suggest recalibrating primary care responsibility in contemporary couples is not a premeditated, conscious decision and statistically speaking, more likely to transpire through economics or circumstance (Doucet & Merla 2007; Merla 2008). Thus, it is entirely conceivable in Australian culture that the family forgo some of their existing or pre-birth income so the mother can stay home to care for young children. The converse however would be an anomaly. Whilst stay-at-home fathers provide a potentially rich source of information at the intersection of gender, work, and family, this cohort still sits at the fringe of typical family composition (Qu & Weston 2013).

Working fathers are an under-researched cohort in the work and family space. They may represent an important but untapped resource for the dawning of greater equality at work and in the home for these above-mentioned reasons. For this reason, fathers are the centre of this study's sampling frame and the contextual focus.

Taken together, the above-mentioned factors indicate that one of the more meaningful, original, and potentially influential understandings in terms of gender equality would no doubt centre on primary care decision making within Australian families and from working fathers' perspective.

Thesis Outline

This thesis presents findings relating to working fathers and their primary caregiving responsibilities for their preschool children. It locates this data within the context of the wider work and family debate and its potential to engender broader gender equality.

The primary level of analysis in this thesis is working fathers and their perception and utilisation of PPL and family-friendly work provisions. These are explored and expressed throughout the following eight chapters.

This chapter has provided a broad overview and introduction to the present study. It defines and summarises the main problem under review and articulates the evidence and current knowledge on gender inequality that underscores the four main areas of interest in this study on father care. It establishes the validity and importance of the study aims and its place as an independent and 'original' body of knowledge on contemporary families, paid work, and care in the Australian context. This chapter also highlights the personal and professional experiences of the writer that served as the impetus and blueprint for the present research.

Chapter 2 presents a review of existing literature. It locates the study amidst the current literature on fathers, work, and care both within Australia and abroad. It focusses on fathers and their participation in the two main policies that would enable shared care for preschool children; PPL, and to a lesser extent, flexible workplace practices. It defines each policy and traces its development in Australia including the gendered division of participation in these policy endeavours.

Chapter 3 then takes a deeper dive into PPL, positioning it as the central government policy response to balancing work and care in Australia. It then provides an international, comparative analysis of policy architecture, its positive impacts on gender equality, and the way fathers are positioned within the policy landscape to achieve a more equal distribution of work and care. It further reveals some of the methodological inadequacies of previous research findings and measurement, particularly around definitions of PPL and other leave policies used for primary care by parents.

Chapter 4 provides a focus on frameworks and theory. The chapter begins with an introduction to the role of theory in research. It is presented here as a set of thinking tools to frame and then inspect both the premise of the research study, the current state of the literature and, later, the study findings. For this research, Pierre Bourdieu's Theory of Practice and Teresa Rees' gender mainstreaming framework are offered as the most practical and informative theoretical frameworks to draw on to develop and enhance the present study and it primary aims.

Chapter 5 presents the study methodology. It explores the ontological and epistemological pillars of the present study and, in particular the use of the pragmatic worldview. It highlights the benefits of utilising

the Mixed Methods Research (MMR) design and its strengths and potential controversies and shortcomings. The procedures, methods, and analysis are then revealed and critiqued, including the key definitions utilised in the study survey and the literature that has guided the decision-making regards to these key facets of the study.

Chapter 6 presents the results of this study. It begins with the main data from the survey across all four areas of interest. This is followed by the qualitative data analysis, tracking the two main themes explored at interview, and their links to the gaps in understanding and knowledge highlighted in the results of the survey.

Chapter 7 provides the discussion and conclusions from the study. This is presented in two main parts. The results of the study are discussed and findings contextualised by the current knowledge explored in Chapter 2, the literature review. Part two of this chapter overlays the main findings within the theory and frameworks of Bourdieu and Rees' gender mainstreaming framework introduced in Chapter 4. The chapter concludes with a review of the limitations of the present study and the researcher's recommendations for future research endeavour in the work and family domain.

Chapter 8 is the final chapter of the thesis. It begins with discussion of the contribution of this thesis to the knowledge base in work and family research. It then considers a range of options and recommendations for both employers and government that are highlighted by the present findings and seeks to bring forward a more gender-equal distribution of work and care to fruition.

Chapter 2 Fathers, Work, and Care

This chapter establishes the current knowledge base on the four main areas of understanding addressed in this thesis – fathers' attitudes and beliefs regarding primary care, what fathers actually do regarding primary care, what they would like to do (including ideal policy conditions), and how they would explain the differences between their aspirations for care and their actual care giving contributions. These understandings will assist in highlighting potential changes to policy and employment conditions to engender a more equal distribution of work and care amongst parents. Given these issues are significantly under examined in Australian research, much of the literature review is centred on international research, particularly that from the Nordic nations. The chapter begins with an introduction to the policies essential to shared care – PPL and flexible work practices. Each policy is defined, its historical roots outlined, and the development and usage of each revealed. The analysis places emphasis on the established understanding of PPL and its potential for influencing gender equality and the distribution of work and care in families. This chapter concludes with a summary of the findings and organisation against the main research questions of the thesis, including the methodological limitations of contemporary research in Australia. Together these understandings establish the platform and justification for the present study as an original and meaningful research endeavour, and the selected methodology to achieve this as outlined in Chapter 5.

Paid Parental Leave in Australia

Until the implementation of the statutory PPL scheme in 2011, Australia (along with North America) was one of only two nations in the OECD without a national paid maternity leave scheme (Whitehouse 2005). Prior to 2011, PPL was only available to employees via their employers. Access and coverage was grossly inconsistent and mainly concentrated in the public service and some large-scale private enterprise (Martin et al 2012). Family-friendly work provisions were similarly positioned.

In response to the growing concern for parents, and mothers who were attempting to balance work and caregiving, the newly elected Rudd Labor Government fulfilled one of their key election promises and established an investigation into PPL in Australia. The Australian Productivity Commission (the Commission) was asked to assess the costs of providing a national PPL scheme and develop a preferred policy model for Australia (Baird & O'Brien 2015). After an extensive investigation including two rounds of public consultations and review of over 400 formal submissions, the Commission released their final report in May 2009. The Rudd government accepted the majority of the Commission's recommendations and the *Paid Parental Leave Act (2010) (PPL Act (2010))* came into effect in January 2011 (Baird & Whitehouse 2012).

The scheme provides up to 18 weeks of government-funded PPL following birth or adoption. Payment is set at the federal minimum wage, currently $672.60 per week (Fair Work Ombudsman [FWO] 2017). For those who have been with their employer for 12 months or more, employers administer the leave via existing payroll processes. Others have their payment distributed via Centrelink. Eligibility for the payment is based on being the primary carer of the child and having a pre-birth engagement in paid employment of at least one day per week, for ten of the 13 months prior to birth. It is a universal payment in the sense that it is available to the self-employed, casual, and part-time workers as well as weekly wage earners.

The scheme covers employed parents earning less than $150,000 per year. Eligibility is based on the primary carer's taxable income in the previous financial year. The payment is classified as taxable income but it does not preclude claims to additional paid leave entitlements from employers. This means that parents can claim the statutory scheme and any entitlements to paid leave from their employer. PPL cannot be taken along with some other family assistance payments such as the Baby Bonus however, take up does not automatically rule out claims to other types of family payments such as Newstart or Disability Pensions (Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs 2013).

The scheme is fully taxpayer funded. Under its current framework, the scheme was predicted to have a net cost of $260 million per year (Martin et al. 2012). The addition of the Paternity Leave component (Dad and Partner Pay (DaPP)), which came into effect in 2013 added around $188 million to the scheme over five years (Brighouse & Wright 2008). The PPL scheme has been in effect in Australia for six years. Over 42,000 women took up the leave in the first three months of implementation and over 144,000 women and 444,000 families have claimed the payments in that time (Martin et al. 2014). As expected, the clear majority of claimants were mothers. Less than 1% of parents taking up the leave were men (Martin et al. 2014; Martin et al. 2012).

The scheme was developed with three central policy aims:

1. Increasing the duration of leave taken by employed women to enhance maternal/child outcomes.
2. Encouraging workforce participation for women.
3. Encouraging greater equity in the distribution of work and care in families and supporting attitudinal change in relation to leave after birth as a normal part of both work and family life. (APC 2009; Martin et al. 2012).

In the lead up to and immediately following the scheme's inception there was considerable debate and critique of the policy architecture and its ability to meet the stated policy aims. On inception, it was hailed a great success for women, yet several groups and advocates were less impressed, and considered it only as a 'first step' towards an adequate scheme for working parents. The stated benefits of the policy have, to date, largely centred on the post-partum maternal health gains and benefits to infants. This has included the expected benefits to rates of breastfeeding and improved attachment and adjustment for both mother and child (Martin et al. 2012; McGovern et al. 2000).

Substantiating the impacts of Australia's PPL on women's workforce participation and the gendered division of work and care has been far more contested in the literature (Adema & Whiteford 2007; Kamerman & Moss 2009; OECD 2011; Orloff 2008). Much has been made of the way in which the policy is constructed and administered, on the basis that the original intent has competing aims and

maternal child health outcomes appear to have superseded any of the workforce and gender equality aims that were intended to arise from the policy (Baird & Whitehouse 2012).

Firstly, from a gender-equality perspective despite being called a ‘paid parental leave’ policy it appears to be a paid maternity scheme in all but name. Each of the stated aims of the policy are positioned and expressed in terms of women. Fathers are patently absent from the stated objectives of the policy (though they are implied) and both the language and intent of the objectives are highly ‘mother’ centric. Even the costing of the scheme was based exclusively on mothers’ take up of the scheme (See B4, APC 2009). This is a curious position for a PPL scheme, and this one in particular, because father care is critical to meeting objective three of the policy – supporting an equal division of care amongst parents.

In addition, scheme objectives one and two may be directly in conflict. Increasing women’s participation in the workforce is best achieved by promoting a shorter period of leave whilst child well-being and maternal health are best achieved through encouraging a longer period of care at home (Baird & Whitehouse 2012). Competing priorities are not unique in the development of a social policy such as PPL, however, it does appear that the workforce attachment objectives for women may have been overshadowed by the maternal and/or child health needs in our present policy (Brown 2008; Kamerman & Moss 2009).

Most marked, however, is the lack of genuine potential for the scheme to normalise attitudes in relation to taking employment leave for birth and care. The scheme is paid at the federal minimum wage and therefore treats PPL exceptionally. To legitimise PPL as a ‘normal’ employment leave practice, it would need to be treated similarly to other leave options such as sick leave, annual leave, long service leave and the like (Baird 2004). The exceptional payment rate hardly sends a ‘strong’ signal that having a child and taking employment-based leave for birth and care are a ‘normal’ and accepted part of working life (Australian Government 2009, p.4). Childbirth and care-related leave is therefore only ‘normal’ for women workers and perhaps even then, only for those that can afford to have the primary carer on leave at the federal minimum wage.

A final issue with the policy is the lack of job protection afforded by the *PPL Act (2010)* itself. In what has been described as a 'quirk' of the PPL statute (Broomhill & Sharp 2012, p. 7), is that it does not actually provide for the right of parents to take leave from work or return to their previous position. Job protection is fundamental to all parental leaves. The *PPL Act (2010)* only provides for the compensation aspects of the leave. The job protection elements are decreed through a separate statute – the *Fair Work Act (2009) (FW Act (2009))* (Broomhill & Sharp 2012). This means taking PPL under the statutory scheme provides the compensation for leave but no right to return to work after the leave. With differing eligibility criteria between statutes[2], it is possible that employees are entitled to paid leave payment under the *PPL Act (2010)* but not eligible for the job protected leave under the *FW Act (2009),* which importantly covers the right to return to the pre-birth position and request flexible work practices. This omission leaves a proportion of workers vulnerable when transitioning back from leave to paid employment and undermines the workforce attachment progress that the PPL scheme hoped to gain.

The above observations have been noted by several researchers both here and abroad. A frequent focus of policy critique has been directed at the third and final policy objective (greater sharing of care amongst parents) and the disconnect between this policy goal and the architecture of the policy itself.

Deborah Brennan, Professor of Social Policy at the University of NSW and one of Australia's prominent experts in gender and family policy analysis has argued that even with the present scheme in place:

> 'Australia has a long way to go to achieving a system of paid parental leave that recognises men and women as equal partners in the workplace and the home' (Brennan 2009, p. 28).

Marian Baird, Professor of Employment Relations at Sydney University, and a long time PPL advocate, noted the statutory policy remains deeply entrenched in a minimalist, welfare orientation and is unlikely to alter the distribution of work and care in the home:

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2 Entitlement to parental leave under the *FW Act (2009)* requires 12 months of service whereas *PPL Act (2010)* requires only 10 months from the previous 13 prior to birth (Fair Work Act 2009).

> ‘Fathers will not use the leave when paid at minimum wage, so gender relations in the home will remain unchanged under the new policy’ (Baird, Whelan & Page 2009, p. 13).

Dr Richard Fletcher from the Fatherhood Research Network (Newcastle University) agrees with this sentiment. Drawing on international evidence on successful PPL, he argued that the poor compensation level of the policy will effectively prevent men’s opportunity to participate in the care of their infants (Horin 2010).

In a similar vein, the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU) considered the initial policy announcement cautiously (Australian Council of Trade Unions [ACTU] 2008). They regarded the policy as a ‘good first step’. The Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) felt similarly, calling it a positive ‘first step’. Both organisations have called for reforms that include superannuation attachment, higher rates of pay, and greater flexibility so parents can share the care (AHRC 2008). The latter two features have been strongly associated with improved participation of fathers in the leave and considerable improvement to wider gender equity at work and at home (Esping-Anderson 2009; Kamerman & Moss 2009; OCED, 2011, 2012; Smith & Williams 2007).

As expected, the Australian political scene has also been a source of considerable critique. Dr Sharman Stone, former MP, Federal Shadow Opposition Minister for Women & Early Childhood and now Australian Ambassador for Women and Girls, was particularly scathing in her attack on the final policy – calling the scheme a ‘cheapskate’ deal that locks in existing inequities in terms of women, care, and leave (Harrison 2010). Echoing the sentiments of the above researchers and advocates, Dr Stone has also drawn attention to the low rate of pay that will act as a hindrance to average Australian parents (and fathers in particular) spending adequate periods with their baby (Kelly 2010).

Also of note, is the scheme proposed by the Federal Labor Opposition as an alternative to the current statutory scheme during the 2016 election campaign. This included replacement rates of pay for ‘primary carers’ but it only provided this rate of pay to ‘mothers’. Under the Coalition’s 2015 election platform plan, fathers who take the leave (either as a short duration paternity leave or as the primary carer) would be paid at the mother’s rate of pay. At the time of writing, the current Turnbull Liberal-

National Coalition Government has done a complete about face on the previous Prime Minister, Tony Abbott's signature policy, seeking to now shrink the scheme even further than the original and current provisions by removing what the government had termed 'double dipping', where parents can get payment for leave from government independent of their employer scheme. They now propose that payments are only to go to those parents that were not able to access the equivalent from employers (Vickery 2016). They have further sought to remove the employer administration clauses and are bringing what was originally conceived as a basic, universal but industrial type of payment (the whole reason it was to be administered by employers) into a more minimal, welfare scheme designed to be a safety net for low income earners and other groups not covered by some payment support during the post-partum period.

Whilst the new changes proposed by the Turnbull Government are unlikely to pass in the Senate the fact remains that both the existing scheme, Tony Abbott's previous model, and even the proposed model before the Senate will not assist mothers and fathers to redistribute work and care giving responsibility. The rate of pay and lack of segregated leave for fathers that automatically defaults payment to the mother remains a central concern on gender equality grounds (ACTU 2011; APC 2009; Baird, Whelan & Page 2009; Brennan 2009; Horin 2010; Kelly 2010) and at best, leaves Australia's first statutory scheme a welfare-based maternity leave policy. The introduction of the DaPP scheme appears to further entrench this pattern of primary care, by legitimising the support role fathers play in the caregiving regimes of the family without adequate provision for a more central primary care role.

These concerns regarding the gender equality potential of the policy appear to have some merit given that less than 1% of men have taken up the statutory leave as primary carers (Martin et al. 2014; Martin et al. 2012). To date none of these concerns have been addressed in the scheme and any of the modifications suggested for the policy since. To this end, the data on PPL and primary care post-implementation outlined below, show some six years on that shared caregiving is not a feature of Australia's parental leave landscape and fathers remain at the periphery of primary care that continues to be the mothers' domain (Caldwell & Coote 2012; Martin et al. 2012). This may in some way be attributed to the historical context in which work and care policy has been implemented in Australia.

Historical Context of Paid Parental Leave in Australia

The gendered delineation of work and care at a policy level dates as far back as 1907 in Australia, with most scholars agreeing it began with the Harvester Judgement. As previously noted, the case consolidated a 'decent wage' for men based on a presumption that men's pay would need to reasonably support a wife and three children. What this appears to have unwittingly achieved, however, is embedding an accepted pay differential between men and women based on men's historical role as the primary breadwinner and in the process, caregiving as the woman's domain (Baird 2004). Though not always explicit, it can be noted that from this time, policy has endeavored to redefine the nature of paid work, gender, and reproductive choice as a private or public concern. Governments, advocates, and perhaps even parents themselves have all been attempting to determine the basis of a legitimate claim to government payments for caregiving. These issues remained at the forefront of the debate and policy tensions leading up to the development of the PPL scheme itself. It is also evident that father care remained a peripheral issue in the debate until well into the 1990s, and some 25 years after the importance of father care and gender equality in work and care policy was being examined and promoted within international policy regimes (Haas 1990).

Australia's historical progress towards a statutory PPL scheme is at best, characterised by a resistance to an earner/carer model of citizenship that is more prevalent in international social policy regimes elsewhere in the OECD (Brennan 2009; Orloff 2008). Successive Australian governments have reinforced this position by providing post-natal support payments to women based on their reproductive value and capacity rather than labour force participation. This meant for the most part, there was no differentiation in maternity payments from the government based on employment attachment and, therefore no differentiation made between the rights of working and non-working mothers. Value was placed on the birth itself and no recompense offered for the caregiving and its associated time away from work. This was a deliberate policy position that was aligned with a conservative welfare orientation. This position subtly (and at times not so subtly in the case of the Howard Coalition Government) encouraged the separation of work and family, reinforced a male breadwinner model of the family and valorised women's reproductive responsibility over their workforce contributions. It was the Howard

government, in power from 1996-2007 that explicitly insisted paid parental leave was undermining rather than empowering to women because it would discriminate against mothers who are not in the workforce. Attempts to move forward from this policy position was no doubt intended in the PPL proposal of the Abbott Coalition Government in 2015 through providing replacement rate remuneration and superannuation attachment. The policy did not come to fruition however, and crucially, it was still silent on father care. In this proposal, there were no comparable provisions for replacement pay for fathers even as a 'support carer' in the DaPP provisions, and the automatic default to the mother as 'primary carer' remained. Together, this further entrenched the peripheral position of fathers in primary caregiving.

Figure 2, overleaf summarises Australia's policy trajectory. It clearly demonstrates the way parenthood has come to be synonymous with motherhood in Australia, with all its corollary implications for fathers as caregivers and mothers as workers.

As Professor Deborah Brennan notes:

> 'A focus on women as mothers rather than workers is deeply embedded in Australian institutions and has been reflected in the debates about paid family leave … (insisting) that motherhood itself rather than an absence from employment, should be the basis of entitlement to support. The argument that paid maternity leave is discriminatory because it provides no support to mothers outside the workforce is an example of this attitude' (Brennan 2009, p. 16).

Figure 2: Critical Policy and Legislative Changes to Paid Parental Leave 1907-2012

Date	Change	Details
1907	Harvester Judgement	The Harvester Judgement set a minimum wage for unskilled labourers. The judgement was designed to ensure that a worker could keep his wife and children healthy and comfortable. It did not cover women workers as it was assumed that either their father or their husband would support them.
1912	Maternity allowance	Fischer government – £5. Abolished in 1978.
1966	*Public Service Act (1966)*	Removed barriers to women gaining employment or continuing employment in the public service after marriage.
1969	Equal pay case (1)	This case was generated by the Australasian Meat Industry Employees Union and brought before the Commonwealth Conciliation and Arbitration Commission (CCAC). This provided equal pay for equal work between men and women for comparable jobs
1972	Equal pay case (2)	Removed the necessity to have identical positions for equal pay. Jobs of similar content would now attract equal pay.
1973	First paid maternity leave policy in federal public service	Federal public servants were now entitled to 12 weeks paid maternity leave (mothers) and 40 weeks unpaid leave. Two weeks Paid Paternity Leave for men.
1974	Removal of the 'family' component of the male basic wage	ACTU, National Council for Women, and Women's Electoral Lobby banded together to remove the clause from the minimum wages legislation.
1978	Maternity allowance repealed	Fraser Coalition Government repeals maternity allowance. Payment no longer made for births after October 1978.
1978	Working Women's Charter (ACTU)	A log of claims on women's employment and union issues.
	Paid paternity leave provisions repealed	The paid paternity leave conditions were removed from the federal public service awards.
1979	Maternity leave test case	ACTU generated test case held in CCAC grants 12 months unpaid leave to all private sector employees. This was extended to adoptive parents 1985.
	Convention of Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)	Arising from the United Nations National Assembly – provided a right to paid maternity leave as a fundamental human right.

Date	Change	Details
1988	CCAC was transferred to the Australian Industrial Relations Commission (AIRC)	
1990	Parental leave test case	Transformed the 1979 maternity leave into a gender-neutral parental leave provision – making the leave available to men.
1993	Home care allowance	Granted by the Keating Labor Government to provide source of income for stay-at-home mothers. Replaced tax concessions for dependent spouses. This was absorbed into the parenting allowance in 1995.
1994	*Industrial Relations Reform Act (1993)*	Granted unpaid parental leave to those parents outside the award system with the omission of special maternity conditions for women.
1996	Maternity allowance (reinstituted)	Keating government introduced a maternity allowance in recognition of International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention 103. Equivalent of six weeks of parenting allowance.
	Personal carer's leave test case	ACTU generated test case in the AIRC. Provided for the use of sick leave for the care of others.
1998	Maternity immunisations allowance	Portion of the maternity allowance was cut and redirected to maternity immunisation allowance to encourage women to immunise their infants.
1999	Australian Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commissions Report: Pregnant and Productive	Susan Halliday, Sex Discrimination Commissioner called for a government funded paid maternity leave system.
2001	Work and family test case	ACTU was successful in extending unpaid parental leave provisions to eligible casuals who had worked for an employer for at least 12 months, a reasonable consistent pattern, and expected to have ongoing employment.
2002	Private members Bill introduced for paid maternity leave scheme	Introduced by Australian Democrats – calling for 14 weeks at minimum wage for working mothers
	Australian Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission Report: A Time to Value	Initiated by Pru Goward, Sex Discrimination Commissioner. The report was comprehensive in its scope and research and amongst other recommendations called on the government to initiate a fully funded paid maternity leave scheme of 14 weeks for all working mothers.

Date	Change	Details
	Maternity payment (version 1)	Paid as tax refund of $2500 per year for each child for five years. Paid to adoptive parents from 2005.
2004	Baby bonus	Revamped tax refund – lump sum non-means tested payment of $3000 to all mothers.
2005	Family provisions test case	Provided the right to extended unpaid leave to 24 months and eight weeks of simultaneous unpaid leave for partners at the time of birth. NB: This was not taken up in the Work Choices amendments.
2006	Maternity payment (version 2)	Increased to $4000.00 and continued indexations.
	Australian Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission Report: It's About Time	Report initiated by Acting Sex Discrimination Commissioners, John von Doussa QC calling for a revisit of the maternity leave provisions forwarded in 2002 with the inclusion of a paternity leave provisions and extension duration of leave.
2007	Maternity payment (version 3)	Now known as the 'Baby Bonus Paid in 13 Instalments'. Could be withheld based for quarantining to ensure money was spent as intended.
	Rudd ALP election promise to investigate a paid maternity leave scheme.	
2008	Productivity Commission investigation into paid maternity, paternity leave, and parental leave begins	Commission asked to investigate the economic and social costs and benefits of paid maternity, paternity, and parental leave.
2009	Baby bonus	Baby bonus now income tested to threshold of $75,000 in the six months after birth.
2011	Paid parental leave scheme begins	18 weeks to primary carer paid at federal minimum wage.
2012	Cuts to Baby bonus	Baby bonus reduced to $3000 for second children

Source: Baird (2004), Brennan (2009), Castles et al. (2010), and Lake (1999).

Paternal Access to Paid Parental Leave in Australia

Prior to the implementation of Australia's statutory scheme, contemporary estimates suggested only around half of the working population had access to any paid parental leaves prior to 2011. At this time, the Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA) reported that that only 54% of reporting organisations (those with over 100 employees) provided some form of paid leave in relation to birth and care.[3] The Baseline Mothers Survey (BaMS[4]) rolled out prior to the PPL scheme in Australia was one of the few records of national reporting on paid parental leave at this time.

This study found only 46% of working women were eligible for some form of paid maternity leave from their employer at the time (Martin et al. 2012). Both figures are somewhat lower than comparable assessments of access made by the Commission in 2009 in their original report and undertaking. The Commission utilised data from a nested study within the Longitudinal Study of Australian Children (LSAC) coupled with data from the ABS (APC 2009). The Commission reported around 54% of full-time working mothers had access to an employer-funded paid parental leave prior to birth. They contended that this figure was significantly lower for part-time employees at around 32%; of which around 70% were found to be women (APC 2009). Access to paid leave was thought to be particularly lacking for low paid workers who earned under $500 per week (24%) and was non-existent for the self-employed (APC 2009).

Accurately assessing fathers' access to paid leave, even after the introduction of the statutory scheme, remains difficult to achieve. Even the figures presented by the Commission were unlikely to be accurate. Much of this is due to the fact that maternity leave, parental leave, and paternity leave are often used interchangeably across studies (Diamond, Baird & Whitehouse 2007). This can conflate the data on policy take up. Paternity leave is particularly problematic. It can refer to a primary carer leave available or taken by fathers (true 'parental leave') or the short duration/concurrent leave (true 'paternity leave')

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3 This was the last report on gender-equality provided under the WGEA previous incarnation formally known as the Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Agency (EOWA). This changed in 2012.

4 This survey is based on sample of 2587 mothers who had babies between October - November 2009 and would have been eligible for the government PPL had it been in place at the time of birth.

according to the OECD definition (OECD 2012). The terms maternity leave, parental leave, and paternity leave are often used interchangeably blurring the accurate measure of leave availability, timing, and average duration. This not only represents a critical methodological issue in comparative analysis in this domain but leaves the status of paternal care leave obscured. The impact of sampling without distinction between these very different leave types, from a gender equality standpoint, is exacerbated by this research, often failing to sample men directly on their access and uses. In Australia, a proportion of the studies conducted prior to 2011 on fathers' access to paid leave for birth and care in Australia have used reports from female partners to estimate access (e.g. BaMS 2010) or, have failed to include fathers in their sampling at all (e.g. the LSAC data). Accurate estimates of fathers' access are further hindered by the general lack of clarity amongst the general population (and men in particular) regarding their actual entitlements to care-based leave (Whitehouse 2007). Together this results in a significant proportion of 'don't know' responses in many surveys of this type of leave even in the more reliable data sets that exist in Australia (Martin et al. 2012, p. 19).

The above issues present a significant gap in the paid parental leave knowledge base regarding men, and one that will be addressed by the current study by providing a strong, clear, and contemporary definition of the various care leaves available to fathers, and by asking fathers directly about their care giving practices, and importantly, the leave they utilised to do so. These methodological issues aside, presently available understandings almost unequivocally point to a more limited access to both paternity leave (short concurrent leave to be at home with the mother) and parental leave (used for being the primary carer) for fathers.

Using partner reports of access to paid leaves, BaMS for example, reports only 29% of fathers had access to any paid birth-related leave via employers prior to 2011 (Martin et al. 2012). This increased marginally to 38% after the statutory PPL scheme was introduced. The reduction in use of annual leave indicates that the paid leave components for fathers in the PPL scheme may have been beneficial for overall time away from work after birth (down from 46% to 37.5 % of fathers) however the timing and duration of the leave taking indicate that the leave is unlikely to be for primary care with the majority of leave taking place within the first two months after birth, and for an average duration of just under 11

days of total leave (Martin et al. 2012, p. 129). This strongly indicates paternity leave concurrent with the mother (Baird, Whelan & Page 2009; Whitehouse, Diamond & Baird 2007). Given that the statutory PPL scheme does not have a specific primary care leave component for the father, PPL for fathers remains highly dependent on employer provisions and remains as it was prior to introduction of the government scheme – in the hands of private employers and usually via enterprise agreements (Baird & Whitehouse 2012; Martin et al. 2014; Whitehouse, Diamond & Baird 2007).

The most comprehensive database of enterprise agreements in Australia is the Workplace Agreements Database (WAD). Martin et al. (2012) report only 13.5% of the agreements registered by 2009 in the lead up to the Commission's report included a paid maternity leave clause at all. The registered agreements provided an average duration of 9.5 weeks of paid leave with provisions ranging from just a few days of leave up to 26 weeks. A significant proportion of the leave related to women alone (maternity leave) with little reference to the specific needs of fathers. As one would expect, the duration and eligibility to the leave within industrial agreement frameworks was largely dependent on organisation size and employee engagement pattern. Fathers who were permanent employees in larger organisations of more than 100 staff for example were more likely to have some entitlement to a paid post-natal leave compared to those working in small business (Martin et al. 2012).

Whilst private sector employees had a highly variable access to PPL, both state and federal public service employees have enjoyed a more uniform provision, including fathers. Both the state and federal public service have provided women with 12-14 weeks of paid maternity or primary carer leave for some time (Baird & Williamson 2010). Prior to the statutory leave scheme, paternity leave was usually only for one week in duration and access instituted by a mixed combination of state and federal statutes or employer specific arrangements (Martin et al. 2012).

Whilst paid leave for birth and care was highly differentiated across sectors and positions in Australia, unpaid parental leaves have been more readily available to both working parents for some time. The *FW Act 2009* provides both parents a right to separate 12-month period of unpaid leave following birth or adoption. Eligibility for this leave is based on 12 months of continuous service with the employer. The

leave is also available to casual employees who have worked on a regular and systematic basis. Three weeks of unpaid leave can be taken simultaneously with their partner. Importantly either parent can take an additional period of up to 12 months job-protected leave (FWO 2017).

It is interesting to note that fathers are, under unpaid conditions, more readily included and legitimised as caregivers, yet this is not the case in paid leave policies. Fathers' are highly restricted from access to paid caregiver leaves (and therefore associated statutory rights to care). Paid leave is mainly provided only to women; reinforcing the maternal policy logic.

Paternal Use of Paid Parental Leave in Australia

In terms of policy uptake, when paid leave is available, parents have shown they are likely to take it (Martin et al. 2012), including fathers. Over 95% of eligible mothers and 92% of eligible fathers take the paid component of their available leaves. Fathers however rarely take up the parental leave available (paid or unpaid) as the primary carer even when available to them (Martin et al. 2012).

Prior to introduction of the statutory PPL provision, both parents have shown patterns of leave taking that relied heavily on other types of leave to reach their desired leave duration and minimise financial loss. When taking leave at or around birth, men take on average 1-2 weeks of leave (usually paid annual leave when no paternity leave is available). Naturally, women take much longer leaves - averaging 6-9 months and consisting of a mix of sick leave and annual leave along with any provided paid or unpaid maternity leave (Martin et al. 2012; Whitehouse, Hosking & Baird 2008).

The accuracy of the PPL data above is certainly open to question, because most of the contemporary data on PPL is derived from the PPL implementation and evaluation reports themselves. These reports only sampled PPL eligible parents rather than parents as a group, so the figures represent findings from within the scheme itself. Nevertheless, we can reasonably conclude from their data that the new PPL scheme did increase access to a paid parental leave for those who previously did not have it, but did not greatly impact those working mothers who already had access to leave though their employers and

have not, as such, increased primary caregiving by fathers (Martin et al. 2014; Martin et al. 2012; Martin et al. 2013).

The Phase 4 PPL Evaluation Report released in 2014 found no significant difference in the number of months of leave taken by the leave eligible mothers. Those already with employer funded leave did not take any more time, nor take up the leave in any greater numbers than prior to the introduction of the scheme (Hewitt, Strazdins & Martin 2017, p. 76). This led the researchers to conclude that the scheme might have impacted only those in the lower earning categories, especially groups that did not traditionally have access to paid parental leave in the first place, such as casuals and the self-employed. The impact on leave taking overall and access in the working population regarding parental leave is again obscured by methodological issues and sampling as the reports only measure change within PPL eligible parents. Given the wide eligibility criteria and the high cap on eligibility (at $150,000 per year) it is likely to be a fairly reasonable estimate of the general population. Those outside this sampling frame would be those parents that earn over $150,000 per year, had not met the work test, or that did not know about the scheme in the first place so did not apply. These might account for less than 5% of working parents (Martin et al. 2014).

Together the PPL evaluation reports show that the statutory scheme has had a limited impact on rates of primary care for fathers. The main impact of the statutory scheme is for mothers who would not have had access to any leave or limited paid leave and for fathers regarding the short concurrent leave with the mother. On analysis, the statutory PPL scheme appears to have done little to break down the traditional gender contract of work and care because it effectively keeps the model of leave taking as mother centred. It further casts fathers in a ‘support’ role as opposed to an equal participant with a primary carer right and capacity of their own through only providing DaPP. Thus, the omission of father-centred features from the scheme may represent a missed opportunity to recalibrate the unequal distribution of work and care in families.

Family-Friendly Work Provisions: Flexible Work Practices

In addition to the PPL scheme, flexible work arrangements are a common tool utilised by employers and government to assist working parents to meet their career and caregiving responsibilities. They have been shown to help couples share the work and care load. These are predominantly taken up by women however, so the sharing element appears to be highly skewed in the mother's direction, helping her to participate in work rather than helping fathers participate in care. Nevertheless, they are considered critical to helping families balance their work and family responsibilities as well as supporting the transition from parental leave back to work (Bittman, Thompson & Hoffmann 2004; Russell & O'Leary 2012).

Historically, flexible work practices have been offered as an attraction and retention tool mainly for women in private enterprise. Many employee value propositions and claims of being an 'employer of choice' refer to the ability and willingness of a given employer to offer flexible work arrangements to their employees. In addition, there has been little statutory review or enforcement of flexible work practices, so offers of flexible work arrangements are made on a case-by-case basis and developed at the employer level.

A significant breakthrough in workplace flexibility for parents came in 2010 with changes to the *FW Act (2009)*. This legislated greater right to carers leave and workplace flexibility as part of the New Employment Standards (NES) legislation. These reforms enshrined the right of parents with preschool children (or parents of children with a disability under 18) to request flexible work arrangements, including part-time hours upon return to work from their parental leaves (Martin et al. 2012). This was expanded in 2013 to all carers including parents or guardians, carers of the elderly, or those who require consideration on the grounds of domestic violence (FWO 2013).

Prior to 2009, around 20% (or one fifth) of employees made requests for a change in work arrangements for more than a month (Pocock, Skinner & Williams 2012). Using a large national sample of employees, the Work and Life Diversity Index (2009) found parents were far more likely to ask for and also be granted a flexibility request compared to non-parents, and women twice as likely to request flexibility

compared to men in the first place (Pocock, Skinner & Ichii 2009). Interestingly, men with children were no more likely to make a request for flexibility than men with no children (Pocock, Skinner & Williams 2012) once again highlighting the gendered nature of work and care in Australia.

Whilst the reforms to *FW Act (2009)* were significant, their impact on the utilisation of flexible workplace practices has not been dramatic. Request and approval rates have shifted very little since their introduction in 2010 (Pocock, Skinner & Williams 2012). They also seem particularly stalled for fathers who continue to show a reluctance to make flexibility requests in the first place often citing workplace constraints and negative impacts on their careers as a primary reason for their reluctance (Page & Feenstra 2011; Russell & O'Leary 2012). These figures mirror findings on men, leave, and use of flexible work practices in the international literature (Harrington, Van Deusen & Humberd 2011).

Unlike paid parental leave, men's use of and negotiation of family-friendly work provisions has been the subject of greater inquiry in Australia. In 2011 for example, the 100% Project surveyed 185 employed men and reported that only 39% had requested flexibility from their workplace over their career (Page & Feenstra 2011). The Diversity Council followed this with a more extensive survey of 2100 employees and found that only 41% of men reported choosing their start and finish times –the most basic of family-friendly work provisions (Russell & O'Leary 2012). Only 16% of men reported working part time and 11% report working a compressed workweek. Interestingly, the Diversity Council survey found that 56% of young fathers (under 35) were hoping to work part of their hours from home but only 13% actually did. Given the dissonance between men's actual and desired levels *of flexibility,* it is not surprising that close to 20% of working age men reported they had seriously contemplated leaving their employer because of a lack of flexibility in their work conditions. Remarkably, this figure jumps to 37% when measuring young fathers alone (Russell & O'Leary 2012). This could suggest that flexible work practices are not only more valued by fathers than paid parental leave to assist in caregiving, but that younger cohorts of fathers are perhaps more interested in working flexibly in general. Of course, the desire for flexible work practices does not in itself reconcile to fathers wishing to share primary care with their partners, only that they are keen to have flexible work practices at their disposal.

Flexible work practices have been the main variable of measure in the national Work and Life Index for the last 15 years. The 2012 report was particularly significant because it was based on data drawn after the introduction of the NES which increased employees' rights to request flexible work arrangements. The report however showed the NES has had little impact on the uptake of family-friendly work provisions overall. In 2009, 16.3% of men and 29.1% of women reported making a request. This jumped to only 17.3% for men and dropped to 24.3% for women in 2012. The gender gap in requesting flexibility appears to have also lessened since the introduction of the NES. The authors of the index had noted that it appears this is because women are making less requests for flexibility overall rather than men significantly increasing their utilisation of flexible work (Skinner, Pocock & Hutchinson 2012). It is interesting to also note that this pattern of change mirrors that of changes identified in gender differences in unpaid work in the home (Craig 2007; OECD 2011). Gender differences in rates of unpaid work, such as childcare and housework, are also slowly lessening amongst couples. This global trend however is because women are doing less rather than men doing more (Craig 2007).

The 2012 Work and Life Index showed that the new rights to request provided by the NES have not significantly altered fathers' demand for more flexibility - although 23.4% would like to work flexibly. Interestingly, in this sample, more men (24.8%) than women (21.9%) are discontent with this position. Together these figures suggest a significant level of unmet need for fathers in terms of workplace flexibility (Pocock, Skinner & Ichii 2009; Pocock, Skinner & Williams 2012; Russell & Bowman 2000; Russell & O'Leary 2012) but do not give a clear picture on how fathers anticipate this leave might be used, and if it would actually assist the fashioning of shared care arrangements.

Whilst the *FW Act (2009)* has certainly opened the door to challenging traditional patterns of work for both men and women, flexible work arrangements are hardly a mainstream practice for working parents in balancing their work and family life (Skinner, Pocock & Hutchinson 2012). It also appears men are perhaps more constrained by individual and workplace barriers. Men are more reluctant to ask for flexibility in the first place and then indicate they are less likely to get it (Skinner, Pocock & Hutchinson 2012).

Whilst these differences between mothers and fathers use and take up of flexible work practices may present an issue of gender, it is important to also acknowledge that several flaws in the *FW Act (2009)* still remain, and the dispute procedures can serve as further barriers to utilising these legislative provisions to their full capacity. This makes drawing reasonable conclusions from the data as to the reluctance of fathers to take leave for care problematic. In terms of the flaws in the *FW Act (2009)*, all employees who make a request can only do so after 12 months of continuous service with the organisation (FWA 2012). This means that new workers may have to endure the constraints of incompatible hours and work conditions for 12 months before they can legitimately make a request for review. This would include new fathers who may find themselves transitioning to working parenthood prior to serving their 12 months with the one employer.

Secondly, requests can in fact still be rather easily refused by an employer. The *FW Act (2009)* states that employers are not obligated to approve the request if the employer determines the request cannot be accommodated on 'fair and reasonable business grounds'. Neither the *FW Act (2009)* nor Fair Work Australia defines what those 'fair and reasonable business grounds' might be. According to the refusal clause of the *FW Act (2009)* this could be:

> '…the effect on the workplace and the employers' business of approving the request, including the financial impact of doing so and the impact on efficiency, productivity and customer service, or the inability to organise work among existing staff, or the inability to recruit a replacement employee, or the practicality or otherwise of the arrangements that may need to be put in place to accommodate the employee's request' (FWA 2009, p. 3).

This is a long list of reasonable grounds and gives employers considerable scope to refuse a request. There is no denying that some requests for flexibility will entail additional costs, inconvenience, and extra effort on the part of the employers and potentially other employees. This is because work is typically organised around a model of a full-time worker unencumbered by care responsibility (Masterman-Smith & Pocock 2008), and is precisely the reason why the employee needs flexibility in

the first place. In this sense, flaws in the *FW Act (2009)* and the lack of a right to request serves as a barrier for one group (parents in the workplace) and protection for another (employers).

Finally, like many of the legislative protections provided in the employment sector, the dispute resolution system often undermines the intent of the original law. In this case, the onus remains on the employee to lodge, pursue, and prove a case at law. Fair Work Australia has no monitoring or evaluation programs in place. Thus, invoking the protection of the *FW Act (2009)* in cases of breech or refusal relies then on the individual to invest further time and effort if they wish to access the provisions. The inequity of resources between employers and employees is just one of many disparities that make this dispute process inadequate. It is out of step with the ethos of the legal protection the NES may have potentially provided to working parents and interestingly, it provides significantly less protection than other aspects of the *FW Act (2009)* (AHRC 2014). The poor monitoring and dispute resolution process would certainly act as a deterrent rather than incentive for men (and women) to lodge either a complaint or a request in the first place.

Chapter Summary

The data on paid parental leave and flexible work practices highlights that the policy environment that might assist parents to share care remains highly gendered and skewed towards mothers. This may inadvertently create environments that lock men out of primary care giving. This review has shown that prior to 2011, an estimated 50% of Australian workers did not have access to any form of paid leave for birth and care. Access to paid leave for birth and care was highly variable across occupations, sectors, and organisational hierarchies. Paid leave was concentrated in the higher status, permanent positions within larger organisations, or the public service (Martin et al. 2012). This lack of universal coverage of paid parental leave also explains the continued use of ‘other’ leave types by both men and women when they have children (Martin et al. 2012; Whitehouse 2005; Whitehouse, Baird & Hosking 2006).

Prior to 2011, the Australian industrial relations framework only provided unpaid leave for parents. This effectively precluded a significant proportion of men from participation in care taking post-birth, partly through reduced *eligibility* for paid leave for caregiving overall, and also due to the largely unpaid nature

of the statutory provisions. Whilst men remain the primary breadwinners in contemporary Australian families, unpaid leave virtually ensures working women will retreat from the workforce and continue to take on the majority of care work in families because of their lower relative earnings.

In terms of workplace flexibility, the *FW Act (2009)* had an enormous potential to reframe the traditional model of 'paid work' including the long hours culture of employment and the strict delineation between work and home. It has however, proved, to have little impact on work and care patterns at either the family or the workplace level. Accessing family-friendly work provisions has changed little since the amendments to the *FW Act (2009)* in 2010 and 2013 (Pocock & Skinner 2014). Women remain more likely to request flexible work concessions compared to men and there is evidence that women are more likely than men to have such requests approved (Pocock & Skinner 2014). This highlights the gender bias towards women as carers and contributes to a level of unmet need regarding work and family balance for fathers. This shows the necessity for an improved PPL regime in Australia that provides bona fide, designated leave for fathers that enables participation in the primary care of their children from the outset.

Chapter 3 International Policy Analysis

This chapter reviews paternal participation in paid parental leave across the international policy context. As previously noted, European fathers have had access to designated and highly compensated paid parental leave for some time. This chapter reviews the considerable body of research on the key factors that have made these schemes so successful in terms of policy take-up by fathers and its associations with paternal caregiving more generally. It then contrasts and compares the policy architecture of the Australian PPL scheme with those in the Nordic nations that have had the longest and most father-centric PPL policies to date. Together, this analysis provides a clearer picture of how well the Australian PPL policy contexts compare with those found elsewhere in the OECD and establishes both the knowledge and rationale for the core elements of the data gathering and research questions, including the survey and interview schedule.

International Paid Parental Leave Policy

From a macro perspective, the previous chapter highlighted the ways in which our basic PPL policy, paid at minimum wages and as an 'alternative' to welfare payments such as the Baby Bonus, may both reflect and entrench women's role as the primary carer and men as the primary breadwinner. This makes it less likely men are able to participate in primary care via the statutory PPL scheme. This assertion is further supported when comparing our PPL scheme against nations in the European Union, and to a lesser extent, the wider OECD cohort that have included targeted policy features to actively promote father care and engineer a more equal work and care arrangement amongst parents. The international analysis below highlights the way in which father-centric provisions can promote greater participation in primary care and offer some solid suggestions for the policy conditions that fathers find particularly helpful in sharing care with mothers for preschool children.

Whilst there has been few examinations of the PPL scheme outside of the statutory evaluation in Australia, there has been a plethora of comparative analysis on international PPL schemes in recent years that can be used to reasonably estimate the impacts and outcomes of the Australian scheme and in particular the meeting of its goals to redistribute work and care within families (Baird, Whelan & Page 2009; Broomhill & Sharp 2012; Esping-Anderson 2009; Gornick & Meyers 2005; Ray, Gornick & Schmitt 2009).

Comparative analysis of PPL schemes is highly informative in the context of the present study. Australia is a relative late comer to the OECD cohort regarding PPL however, the provision has been available for some time internationally. By World War I, paid maternity leaves for example, were available in 13 European nations, and by the 1970s, gender neutral, fully paid leave schemes had begun to dominate the European work and family policy landscape (Kamerman & Moss 2009). A comparative analysis of international models and their impacts and outcomes has assisted the present study by providing some sound methodological insights to inform the data collection by highlighting the critical variables of measure to include in the survey and frame the data collection overall. It has further allowed the assessment of how 'father-friendly' the Australian support mechanisms for shared care are compared to some of the more mature policy regimes such as those in the Nordic nations.

Paid Parental Leave in the OECD

Most OECD nations have a national system of paid leave for parents (Kamerman & Moss 2009). There is, however, considerable divergence across countries in the policy structures and the core objectives that drive them. The variable foci of policy efforts are inextricably linked to broader social and economic goals that can be both constrained and enhanced by conceptualisation of gender, family, and the welfare state. In this way, policy structures can serve as an agent of transformation or continuity within the existing political, gender, and economic order (Kamerman & Moss 2009; OECD 2011; Smith & Williams 2007; Whitehouse, Hosking & Baird 2008).

There are considerable differences amongst nations in duration of leave provision, payment rates, and the composition of the various paid, unpaid, maternity, paternity, and parental leave allocations.

Statutory maternity leave is the most widely available leave internationally. However only around half of the nations in the OCED provide a PPL scheme. Combined weeks of job-protected leave for a two-parent family vary widely; from a low 14 weeks in Switzerland to over 300 weeks in France and Spain and all with unique combinations of paid and unpaid leave components, eligibility, and flexibility guidelines (Ray, Gornick & Schmitt 2009).

As can be examined, the schemes in the Nordic nations (Sweden, Denmark, Norway, Finland, and Iceland) are arguably the most generous in terms of coverage, eligibility, and remuneration. It is no surprise that these nations are also built on a social democratic model of government that emphasise government intervention in wealth redistribution, full employment, and gender equality as a means of equalising standards of living across citizens (Esping-Anderson 1990, 2009). Whilst much has been made of a 'Nordic' model of PPL (O'Brien 2013; Orloff 2008) there is in fact no such model that exists. There are significant differences across the policy architectures of the Nordic nations demonstrating the idiosyncratic application of policy goals that are heavily influenced by the social, economic, and political context of a given locale (Kamerman & Moss 2009).

Norway and Sweden, for example, do not have a distinguished maternity leave policy in their structure. Leave is available to mothers before and after birth but this is portioned from a wider generic leave for *parents*, some of which is (unevenly) segregated for men and women with the balance provided as a family-based entitlement that can be divided as the couple sees fit (Ray 2008). Iceland however, has diverged from its Nordic cousins by taking a more decisive step in proportioning the leave amongst parents with an even 3/3/3 split, where three months is ring-fenced for the mother, three months for the father, and the remainder for either parent. In contrast, Finland has another set of arrangements that has in recent years specifically incentivised leave taking by fathers by using bonus weeks of leave to encourage fathers to participate in primary care (Baird, Whelan & Page 2009; Broomhill & Sharp 2012; Esping- Anderson 2009; Ray, Gornick & Schmitt 2009).

Outside of the Nordic nations, we also see some continuities and convergence in policy goals and platforms across nations and, in some cases across time (e.g. Germany), or between provinces and regions within the same nation (e.g. Canada).

Germany, for example, has had arguably one of the biggest policy shifts in more recent years by taking a decidedly 'Nordic turn' over time (Erler 2009, p. 119). When paid leave was first introduced in West Germany in 1986, the policy was structured in ways that aligned with the male breadwinner model of the family and promoted long-term maternal caretaking of children. The policy originally provided a long duration of leave (up to three years) that was paid at a low flat rate. The maternal model of PPL was greatly supported by a conservative government philosophy and its endurance reflected the power and influence of Germany's religious right that believed parental care in the first three years was imperative for sound child development (Erler 2009).

In 2007 however, radical shifts occurred in the parental leave regimes of Germany. Driven by the shrinking workforce participation of mothers and a declining fertility rate, the government sought to abandon the policies of the past and embraced a more gender equitable model (Kamerman & Moss 2009). The low flat rate of payment was soon replaced with a policy set at 67% of pre-birth earnings. The duration of leave was reduced from 24 to 12 months and the policy specifically incentivised father care through increasing leave allocations by two months if the father should take it. This latter move proved extremely effective in Germany; increasing father care by 20% in just two years (Reich 2011). What is especially important to note here is the lever of change. Whilst both early and contemporary policy approaches in Germany were driven in part by fertility concerns, the latest reforms draw on evidence from the OECD regarding the strong correlation between increased rates of birth, women's workforce participation, and overall gender equality gains (OECD 2011). Thus, motives for policy development have focussed on reproduction as well as work, however, incentivising fathers to care has become the preferred strategy for change in the contemporary policy.

Parental leave policy has also transitioned considerably outside the European Union. In Japan, a normally laggard nation in terms of gender equality, the government recently instituted major reforms.

In 2007, they altered the maternity leave provisions to a parental leave policy of 14 weeks – available to either parent at 60% of previous earnings (Yamato 2008). Also, when fathers take the leave in the early stages of care, the overall leave duration is extended by two months (Ray 2008). Like Germany, these reforms were largely a response to declining fertility and poor rates of workforce participation of women. The Japanese government also used father incentives and improved flexibility to promote improved outcomes in these domains. Unlike Germany however, policy change has had a limited effect. Even with the reforms in place, less than 1% of all fathers take any form of leave upon the birth of their children (Buerk 2010). Japan remains amongst the last in the OECD in terms of fathers take up of PPL. The low rate of pay and lack of ring-fenced leave are implicated in these outcomes. The long working hours culture and patriarchal traditions of the Japanese 'company' have also been attributed to ongoing barriers for fathers in care (Boling 2008).

In contrast, France presents a different set of conditions and experiences. Although like Germany, greater workforce participation for women has been a major concern for the French state, France has tended to pitch reforms at increasing access and affordability of childcare rather than altering the parental leave regime itself. This goes against trends within most of the European Union (Fagnani & Math 2009). Whilst this strategy has had some success in terms of altering patterns of work for mothers, it has not had comparable gains in terms of gender distributions of care in the home that has been evident in other nations. As a result, France, like Japan, remains a mother-centric care regime though for very different reasons (Fagnani & Math 2009).

In the context of the above, the present study is particularly concerned with father care provisions in their potential for promoting a more equal distribution of work and care amongst parents. What the preceding data has highlighted is a pattern of reform that has important implications for the present research. Whilst PPL policies have some major differences in terms of rates of pay, duration of leave, and gender eligibility, a line of continuity can be examined in that parental leave policies are shifting away from a singular concern with maternity leave, fertility rates, and maternal/child health outcomes alone. The emphasis on engendering gender-equality in caregiving is deeply entrenched in the Nordic models of PPL and this is slowly expanding across the policy regimes of the OECD cohort and several

international policy models. These are considered to truly embody the ideology of shared care amongst parents. Declines in fertility rates and women's labour force participation have no doubt driven this focus, but an increased interest in providing policy for fathers in their own right is also examined in the literature (Castles et al. 2010; Kamerman & Moss 2009; Smith & Williams 2007).

One of the major differences that can be found even amongst 'father-friendly' nations regarding PPL is the degree that various state regimes are willing to go beyond offering a gender symmetrical policy platform. Exemplar countries actively seek to ameliorate the structural barriers for fathers participating in care. A point of difference amongst such nations is how the policy positions fathers as a valid and alternative source of primary care for children and the degree the policy encourages if not compels fathers to participate as a primary caregiver as a way of removing any cultural or workplace barriers to taking up such leave. An often un-interrogated assumption evident in all research activity in finding a policy model with the most appeal to fathers and breaking the barriers of paternal care of children, is that this will result in tangible benefits and that it is these ideal policy conditions from which shared care (or at least a more equally shared model of care) may ensue. The next section of this literature review explores this evidence base in more detail.

Towards a Best Practice Model of PPL for Shared Care

Gender equality has been a deliberate and decisive goal of work family policy across the OECD for some time (OECD 2011). Paid parental leave and flexible work policies are central to this endeavour. The research on father-centric PPL regimes especially, suggests PPL policy that seeks to redistribute care amongst parents as part of its policy objectives must include some very specific provisions for fathers as a basic entitlement. These include highly compensated leave and a ring-fenced leave entitlement that can only be taken by fathers (Gornick & Meyers 2005; Ray, Gornick & Schmitt 2010; Axelsson 2014). Not only do men's relative earnings to women's make the remuneration of any leave particularly significant for men, but fathers have shown a marked reluctance to take a proportion of any family-based entitlement (McKay & Doucet 2010). These two understandings have emerged from over 30 years of research on parental leave and they appear to provide sound suggestions for the present

study in terms of highlighting what factors Australian fathers might suggest are the barriers and enablers of primary care and what factors are decisive in moving them from intention to practice on primary caregiving for their children.

A second goal of this research is to understand the reasons why father care might be so beneficial to shared care endeavours. This segment of literature has its roots in Sweden and develops from its long and decisive leadership on social policy that had all but compelled fathers to share at least some of the primary care with their partner (Hass & O'Brien 2010). A broader research agenda on the policy outcomes of paternity leave can also be observed from broader areas of work and family life, such as the emergence of the cognitive and social benefits of the father taking PPL on children and on the fathers who take it (Fletcher, Matthey & Marley 2006; Flood 2003; Lamb 2004; O'Brien 2013; Sullivan et al. 2009), marital satisfaction and stability (Feldman, 2000), social participation (Knoester, Petts & Eggebeen 2007), child health (Tanaka 2005), and educational achievement of children (Cools, Fiva & Kirkebøen 2015). These contemporary research findings now sit alongside more well-known outcomes such as maternal labour force benefits and de-gendered caregiving (Esping-Anderson 2009). Whilst the former research endeavour is positive affirmation of the broader social good of supporting fathers in caregiving, the present thesis has a stronger interest in the latter benefits of the leave and mechanisms of PPL. More specifically, the empirical evidence base shows up take of PPL by fathers has concomitant increases in overall gender equality amongst and through couples. As the following review will highlight, these outcomes are a pattern consistently found from policies that have specific father quotas (O'Brien 2013).

PPL and Gender Equality

The notion that PPL could engender a more equal distribution of work and care with gender equality benefits began in the Nordic nations as early as the 1970s. The Swedish government were pioneers of this policy logic on the premise that men and women would need to have equal financial and caregiving responsibility if gender equality was to ensue (Haas 1990). Inculcating fathers into PPL was a direct strategy designed to achieve this state of equality.

In 1990, Haas conducted one of the earliest larger scale empirical investigations on parental leave and later care of children. This researcher sampled couples who shared their parental leave and found fathers that took parental leave had more involvement with children and contributed more to caregiving with their partners after they had participated in PPL. Fathers were not only more directly involved in caregiving but also showed slightly reduced participation in the labour force following paternity leave (Haas 1990). The reduced work hours were thought to allow more time to assist in caregiving and breaks with the very entrenched gendered pattern of women fitting their work life around caregiving (Haas 1990).

This research sparked a plethora of interest on the subject that then began to extend beyond Sweden. As the notion of non-transferable leave for fathers took hold across Europe, researchers have also established natural, cross-group comparisons pre- and post-implementation (Duvander & Jans 2009). Over the years, the level of scholarship on the issue has increased rapidly and on the whole, affirms the positive effect of father caregiving on the gendered distribution of work and care.

The research on this issue is extensive. The investigations on paternal primary care and its association with latter care within the European Union and beyond yields over 100 studies in the last 20 years. Many of these studies have been well synthesised and summarised in large scale reviews conducted by the OECD (Adema & Whiteford 2007; Huerta et al. 2013; OECD 2013). A selection of the most instructive studies in terms of the present study are explored in more details below. Together the research has informed the content and structure of the data collection and the survey instrument in this thesis, highlighting what variables of interest to include. On the whole, the research strongly indicates that father care leads to improved outcomes in terms of latter caregiving and the overall distribution of work and care amongst the couple (O'Brien 2013).

The Evidence Base for Gender Equality

Brandth and Kvande (1998) interviewed 68 parents on their use of the two new Norwegian interventions that were designed to promote shared care amongst couples and more caregiving by fathers overall.

In this case the researchers found that couples who took up the parental leave options of a ‘daddy quota’ were more likely to share the caregiving in more equal amounts before the same child went to preschool. Couples who used the ‘cash for care’ incentives did not share care to the same degree as the PPL group, and tended to use the bonus to help the mother stay at home for longer rather than reimburse the father for additional time away from work. The researchers found that the ‘use it or lose it’ (non-optional) policy was more effective than the ‘cash for care’ incentives that were also being introduced in Norway at the time, in terms of sharing care amongst the couple.

Over the years larger quantitative studies have further expanded the knowledge on the impact of PPL on longer-term care giving by fathers. Hass and Huang (2007) for example found support for PPL improving longer-term caregiving for children up to 12 years of age. They used data from 356 fathers employed in large Swedish firms and found several positive impacts of taking the full ‘daddy quota’, which included more sustained childcare responsibility and shared care for children for these fathers after their leave had concluded. The researchers found that the longer the fathers took leave the more this was positively associated with hours of solo care when the mother worked. This PPL and work connection with mothers makes this research particularly critical for understanding an earner carer-carer arrangement in families because it provides a model of care much closer to a shared primary care arrangement where both work and caregiving are divided amongst parents (Haas & Hwang 2008). This same research also found a significant positive correlation with time on parental leave and self-reports of fathers’ overall satisfaction with parenting. Not all hypotheses were supported in the study however. Leave taking alone was not enough to render significant results on longer-term care giving for fathers highlighting the contextual nature of care taking arrangements and hinting that direct effects may be mediated by other influences (Hass & Huang 2007). Nor did the leave increase the level of emotional rather than physical care taking carried out by fathers compared to their partners. Longer leave and doing the care alone were the most positive arrangements for the future care of children and suggest parental leave for sole care to be more beneficial for later care and work sharing (Haas & Hwang 2008).

A year later the above findings were supported using a sample of 4000 Swedish parents with children born between 1993-99 when policy changes were occurring yet again in Sweden. The researchers

looked at both the level of contact separated fathers had with their children, as well as later caregiving of intact couples. Duvander and Jans (2009) found fathers who took longer leaves after birth of their children continued to provide more care for their children in later years. Similarly, to Hass and Huang (2007), this care was empirically associated with reduced work hours post leave, giving fathers greater opportunity to continue their childcare involvement after the leave.

Comparable findings on sustained childcare after care-based leave for fathers has also been found in samples outside the Nordic belt (Tanaka & Waldfogel 2007). In the UK, Tanaka and Waldfogel (2007) used data from a large cohort study of 9560 parents and found a positive relationship between paternal leave taking and slightly longer-term caregiving activities for their children. This research used specific care tasks and time in sole care, including nappy changing, feeding, and attending to children in the night. Fathers who took parental leave were 25% more likely to change nappies and almost 20% more likely to attend to children during the night for example, even after the leave and when returning to work. Importantly, this was not related to their attitudes to parenting prior to having the baby, which has been a common critique of this kind of cross sectional research (Tanaka & Waldfogel 2007).

The direct effects of paternal leave taking for care on longer-term childcare arrangements has surprisingly also been noted in some North American samples that do not have a statutory parental leave system at all. Thus, any paid leave is usually taken via employer schemes or using other forms of short term leave arrangements. Nepomnyaschy and Waldfogel (2007), for example, used longitudinal cohort data of over 10,000 children and reported direct effects for father involvement with their children up to nine months after their leave. As found in the previous studies, longer leaves were associated with greater levels of caregiving after the leave.

Surprisingly, even Australian samples show similar effects even in the absence of any ring-fenced leave for primary care for fathers within the statutory system. Hosking, Whitehouse and Baxter (2010) however, did not find support for a correlation between leave taking and later care. Like Nepomnyaschy and Waldfogel (2007), the researchers used longitudinal cohort data from Australia. Their review of leave after birth and later care did not find any significant difference between those fathers that took

four or more weeks of leave after birth and those that did not. The researchers did however find an association between hours of work and care taking. Those fathers who took parental leave after birth spent more time in sole care of children on the weekends, with the researchers concluding it is the work context that likely contributes to post-leave caregiving rather than the leave itself. Baxter and Smart (2011) affirmed these findings in their specific analysis of the same data set. They too found a relationship between work hours and father care. In particular, the more mothers worked, the more fathers spent time alone with children. They also found that more variance in actual time spent with children over time was explained by other factors such as education level, their work hours, mothers' work hours, and children's age rather than whether the father took leave after birth.

The above review provides some concrete examples of the both quantitative and qualitative research on the leave and later care connection that is a central premise of the statutory PPL systems that provide a ring-fenced leave for fathers. Whilst it is reasonably established in the literature that fathers that take leave after the birth of their children are more likely to assist in caregiving and, in some cases the provision of greater levels of father care after the initial leave, there are some methodological issues in terms of the findings, and reliability in terms of this connection that must be noted before we can conclude that leave taking leads to more shared care of children.

Conflagration of leave types in this research domain remains a common and pervasive issue. As previously noted, researchers in this field are not always reporting the type of leave taken and often report using generic leave terms that can mean different things across national models (Haataja 2009; O'Brien 2013). Some studies report fathers leave taking, but do not specify if it is primary care leave (parental leave) or leave taken with the mother (usually paternity leave or other recreational leave post-birth). Whilst others specify time averages, some are still reporting relatively short durations of leave (Hosking, Whitehouse & Baxter 2010) and far from the longer leaves (e.g. months) that are taken up by women in Australia (Whitehouse, Diamond & Baird 2007; Whitehouse, Hosking & Baird 2008). If duration of the leave and its association with later care of the child is critical, then understanding if the leave taken was paid parental leave involving sole caregiving, or other leave such as concurrent with

the mother, is an important factor of analysis that must be made explicit if adequate comparisons of data and outcomes are to ensue (Haataja 2009).

In addition, most of the quantitative studies on the leave and care nexus are correlational at best – linking leave taking with increased caregiving by association. An inability to reliably unearth factors of cause is a common challenge of cross-sectional analysis (Baxter and Smart 2011). As Schober (2014) and others (Adema & Whiteford 2007; Haas & Hwang 2008) have indicated, it may be that the fathers who work shorter hours are simply more interested in caregiving and it is the interest and not the leave taking that accounts for this. The same can be said for the 'daddy quota' itself. It is possible that fathers who take up the parental leave are already care-centred fathers, rather than PPL transforming fathers into motivated caregivers.

Finally, the care leave/latter care connection could be mediated by other factors beyond leave taking alone. As found in some studies, mothers' work hours and overall support of fathers as caregivers also has meaning in the distribution of work and care amongst parents. Baxter and Smart (2011) for example found that mothers' hours of work were strongly related to father care in their LSAC sample data. These researchers speculated that this may be a result of greater competence and confidence in caretaking that leads to more care. Others have noted it could be related to maternal gatekeeping which is hypothesised to mediate paternal care in quality and quantity (Fagan & Cherson 2015; Makusha & Richter 2016; Zvara, Schoppe-Sullivan & Dush 2013).

Schober (2014) was particularly interested in understanding the direct effect of parental leave on fathers' longer-term caregiving as well as isolating impacts from other variables of influence. To this end the researcher explored the outcomes of two very distinct reforms on PPL policy reforms in Germany. Until 2007, Germany had demonstrated what Esping-Anderson (1990) had deemed a corporatist-style parental leave. This entailed an increasing duration of leave with job protection clauses attached but paid at a long flat rate of compensation. This is a classic combination for corralling mothers as lower income earners into the long leave taking for primary care. Failure to offer subsidised childcare exacerbated this effect (Schober 2014). In 2007, the previous policy gave way to reforms that centred

on encouraging PPL take up by fathers. This was driven by the plethora of research emerging from the EU on father care and the equality promoting PPL policy of Sweden, Iceland, and later Norway that had a specific provision for fathers (Deven & Moss 2002).

Offering a natural experiment of difference, Schober (2014) used panel data from the Socio-Economic Panel (SOEP) survey pre- and post-reforms. She analysed over 900 reports from parents and found that the increases in childcare from fathers in the first year of life was directly related to taking parental leave. Those fathers who took the two months of primary care leave known as the 'daddy quota' did more caregiving than those that did not take this leave even after the leave had concluded. Importantly for the purpose of the present study, it was the primary care leave and not the concurrent leave with mother leave that was found to be most important. Fathers that just took 'some leave' (and quite likely with the mother) did not perform more childcare after the leave itself compared to primary care leave takers. The policy architecture in Germany prior to 2007 typified the long duration and low compensation combinations found in other continental European nations. This was further found to be strongly associated with almost all caregiving being carried out by the mother in the first 12 months post-birth. The researcher asserted that policy changes may directly affect the caregiving ideals allowed to operate within the family, especially at the critical junctures of care arrangements in the first 12 months after birth (Schober 2014, p. 369). Primary care by the father was thought to disrupt the gender dynamics in the home by diffusing the division of care on grounds other than gender. This means decision making has an opportunity to take place in contrast to default care by the mother as result of low wage compensation for fathers (Schober 2014).

It is important to note that as an exploratory study, this thesis does not seek to clarify the exact 'causes' of father care after taking the parental leave. However, as a MMR project that relies on survey as the central data collection tool, the above findings and the research that identifies the presence of alternate factors of influence on primary care decision-making are important. This is because they may be potential (and potentially competing) factors of influence in this sample, which is a central question to be answered by fathers. Asking fathers to identify the main factors of influence from a range of known impacts and clarifying their mechanisms at interview will be instructive.

Known Barriers to Primary Care for Fathers

Much has been made of the ideal policy architectures of PPL to encourage fathers to take up the leave and contribute to the primary care of their infants (Adema & Whiteford 2007; Huerta et al. 2013; O'Brien 2013). International evidence suggests the structure of the policy and in particular the rate of pay, flexibility of provision, and whether entitlement is a family or individual condition, all play a critical role in paternal participation in PPL (Almqvist 2008; Duvander, Lappegard & Andersson 2010; Esping-Anderson 2009; Featherstone 2009; Huerta et al. 2013). Further, other studies have asserted influences such as organisational culture, gender role schemas, and partner preferences for work and care can also mediate decisions on primary care leave for fathers (Baxter 2000; Fischer 2010; Haas & Hwang 1995; Hyde, Essex & Horton 1993; Kangas & Rostgaard 2007; Lappegård 2012; Seward, Yeatts & Zottarelli 2002).

The above noted findings have come from a long history of investigation in the European Union. There is a plethora of evidence on the favorable circumstances for fathers to take up a PPL. The sum of findings from the Nordic nations at least, show that the architecture of PPL can create dramatic effects on the gendered division of caregiving. For example, when Iceland introduced its 3/3/3 policy (three months of ring-fenced leave for the father, three months for the mother and three for either parent) paternal participation in PPL rose from 3% to 31% of eligible fathers in the ensuing years (Haas & Rostgaard 2011, p. 191). The rate of compensation and the fact that the fathers had a ring-fenced, designated leave were found to be the main drivers of the change (Gislason & Eydal 2011). In unison with rates of compensation, it is the actual structure of the leave itself that also appears important and therefore the need for ring-fenced leave. Fathers show a strong reluctance to take leave when part of a family pool. Fathers often feel their role as a carer is secondary to mother care and thus, defer most of a family pool to the mother (McKay & Doucet 2010). Conversely, mothers have also reported they see PPL leave allocation as a ‘gift’ they bestow on the father when they transfer such leave to the father (O’Brien & Twamley 2017). These findings highlight the interdependence of leave taking within couples when ring-fenced leave for the father is not a policy feature. The evidence suggests that both parents agree the mother is the main custodian of primary care for children and by extension the leave

associated with such (Almqvist 2008; Lammi-Taskula 2008; O'Brien, Brandth & Kvande 2007; O'Brien & Twamley 2017).

Whilst gender remains an organising principle of leave taking for care of children, the evidence overwhelmingly adds that policy is foundational. In more recent international reviews of fathers and their involvement in care, the availability of leave was considered the first and vital step in sharing care amongst parents (Huerta et al. 2013; O'Brien 2013).

Huerta et al. (2013) for example, compared four national patterns of PPL take up by fathers and reported major differences amongst fathers in the time after birth that directly related to policy availability. Comparisons between the UK, USA, Australia, and Denmark found dramatic differences in amount of time after birth between these nations – the biggest difference being between fathers in Denmark where 90% of fathers took two or more weeks of leave after birth, and the smallest from the USA at just 33%. Of the core differences between these four nations is the degree of compensated leave specifically for fathers. Denmark offers two weeks of paid leave close to replacement rates whilst the USA has virtually no paid leave provisions at all for mothers or fathers, and it appears to have a dramatic effect on take up and duration of leave.

As noted in the previous section however, it is the duration of leave and solo nature of the leave taking itself that has the critical impact on latter care by fathers and holds the biggest potential as a driver of sharing childcare amongst parents (Huerta et al. 2013). On this front, increased leave up take and duration have been found for fathers when the leave is both compensated and ring-fenced for fathers (Brandth & Kvande 2009; Haas & Hwang 2008; Wall 2014), but the literature indicates that policy alone is not the silver bullet to address the barriers to shared care. Other influences on leave take up have consistently emerged.

Demographic factors for example, are found to indirectly affect shared care through their mediation of leave taking. Fathers' level of education, marital status (married versus de-facto), and income levels have all been found to influence leave taking with higher earning, married men, with more education

taking more time off and having more involvement with their children after birth than their lower earning, less educated counter parts (Esping-Anderson 2009; Huerta et al. 2013).

The workplace also emerges as another site of influence affecting leave taking for men and by extension the shared care arrangement amongst parents. Research in the Nordic states has again been at the forefront of understanding (Deven & Moss 2002). Overall findings across national samples converge in that the workplace often places intangible fetters on the take up of available leave (Haas, Allard & Hwang 2002; Haas & Hwang 1995; Merla 2008).

Here in Australia several studies have explored the role of the workplace in fathers' take up of work and family policy, and flexible workplace practices. Though this research has not looked at PPL specifically, it does indicate that fathers do not feel supported and legitimised as carers in Australian workplace even when legislation asserts this role. This has been found in international research as well (Anderson & Kelliher 2009; Bünning 2015; Dreyfus 2013; Haas 2003; Haas & Hwang 1995).

Lack of workplace support, for example, was touted as the main reasons why more men did not apply for workplace flexibility, across two Australian surveys on men and flexibility in the workplace. In 2011, the 100% Project surveyed 185 employed men (Page & Feenstra 2011). The same year the Diversity Council of Australia conducted similar research using a larger sample of over 2000 fathers. Both surveys unequivocally cited the workplace as the main barrier to adopting flexible work practices (Björk 2013; Page & Feenstra 2013; Russell & O'Leary 2012).

In related research, the Australian Human Rights Commission looked at discrimination experiences of parents in relation in pregnancy, birth, and parental leave. The survey found that 27% of fathers and partners experienced some form of discrimination either during pregnancy or after return to work from paternity leave. Of these, almost half reported they had experienced negative attitudes in the workplace, with almost 30% reporting discrimination with regards to approvals for leave for care and flexibility (AHRC 2014, p. 14). Although these findings were drawn from a relatively homogeneous sample of fathers who took the statutory DaPP in Australia and may lack generalisability, the findings allude to the fact that even when a bona fide statutory leave is provided for fathers and at no cost to employers,

workplaces may still hold negative views of leave taking for care and place corollary sanctions on fathers who wish to take part in this caregiving of their children (AHRC, 2014).

These understandings about men, leave, and the workplace are not exclusive to Australia. Comparable findings have been found in the USA (Harrington, Van Deusen & Fraone 2013; Harrington et al. 2014; Harrington, Van Deusen & Humberd 2011), Japan (Boling 2008), and even samples in the father-centred Nordic belt (Björk 2013; Dreyfus 2013; Radcliffe & Cassell 2015). A key theme emerging from the aforementioned studies is that access to leave alone does not guarantee take up and participation and sanctions for leave taking do in fact exist (Kangas & Rostgaard 2007; Lappegård 2012; Lapuerta, Baizán & González 2011).

The nature of these barriers to caregiving for fathers noted in the literature are broad but tend to centre on lack of cooperation from managers in arranging leave (Lammi-Taskula 2008), lack of role models and father care visibility at work (Bygren and Duvander 2006), poor support and approvals for taking over existing workloads whilst on leave (Brandth and Kvande 2001), and the already noted financial penalties, such as lack of pay increases and promotion after the leave has been taken (Rege & Solli 2013). The understanding that emerges from the literature on father care, policy, and leave taking shows both managers and employer institutions can be ambivalent and at time hostile towards fathers who wish to provide care for their infants. This has impacts on leave take up as the first step and the duration of the leave taken after. Even in the Nordic belt and with additional incentives for fathers to take up the leave, leave taking can be impervious to change.

For example, Haas and Hwang (2008) looked at levels of support organisations provide for fathers in caregiving and associated leave taking. They found that formal support in the way of company policy was often present but this was undermined by informal influences such as covert disapproval of leave takers by managers (Haas & Hwang 2008, p. 319). In previous and subsequent reseach by the same authors, co-workers and managers have not been found to react positively to fathers who wanted to take leave and may explain the lack of full participation of fathers in even the most generous PPL systems (Haas & Hwang 1995, 2008, 2009).

The relationship between primary care, leave taking, and the workplace also appears to apply to the mother's as well as the father's workplace situation. Lappegård (2012) for example, found that the leave taking arrangements that are negotiated amongst couples can be mediated by the mother's as well as the father's workplace in terms of the amount of leave available, the impact of leave on careers, and the implicit support for leave taking.

Parental leave practice that involves fathers taking more leave than the father's quota and the mother's somewhat shorter leave, compared to those taking the maximum, is linked to the mother's workplace situations. Whereas, fathers with partners working in workplaces with little cost of long absences from work, are less likely to take long leave than other fathers (Lappegård 2012, p. 305).

This research found that mothers are more likely to return to work earlier if there are explicit penalties for staying away from their career too long, thus leaving a gap in care need. In these cases, fathers who were happy to step in took longer leave when the mother felt compelled to return to work sooner. This affirms findings elsewhere of the interdependence between leave take up between fathers and mothers. Mothers have the lead on how long the father will take for leave (Brandth & Kvande 2009; Lappegård 2012).

The above understandings have implications for nations such as Australia that have a weak statutory system and a long history of privileging maternal care in the workplace and in the broader society (Brennan 2009). Well-compensated and job-protected leave entitlements appear to be the doorway to a more shared model of parental care during the preschool years, but the workplace can indeed withhold the key in both mothers' and fathers' leave taking. This makes assessing the situation in the context of the couple important. The father's leave is likely to have been influenced by the mother's available leave.

Many researchers have and continue to note that the resistance to leave taking from fathers and a range of unseen forces that may lock men out of caregiving are likely to be a function of an ideal worker model that values full-time workers, always available to the organisation for high intensity workloads (Baxter 2000; Björk 2013; Dreyfus 2013; Sallee 2012; Tremblay 2010). Women have experienced the

underlying tensions of meeting these unrealistic expectations when attempting to combine caregiving with work for some time. The above studies suggest the ideal worker model could also impact on fathers who seek to provide care and develop an earner/carer position in the workplace. Such fathers may be conflicted about their roles but they are likely, empirically speaking, showing signs of being contained, as they attempt to avoid what was previously conceptualised as a maternal penalty for caregiving (Harrington, Van Deusen & Humberd 2011).

A final influence on any consideration of leave taking behaviour by fathers is that of maternal gatekeeping and, indirectly, the work hours of mothers (Adema & Whiteford 2007; Baxter 2014; Baxter & Chesters 2011; Duvander, Lappegard & Andersson 2010). The research in these domains are premised on the notion that father care can only usually ensue if a care deficit emerges, usually when the mother seeks to return to work (Lappegård 2012). Empirically this manifests as changes in father care when mothers' hours of work increase (in Australia see (Baxter 2013b, 2013c). As has been noted above, even amongst egalitarian couples is it is often seen as the primary right of the mother to take leave and step back from the workplace for care (Lappegård 2012; McKay & Doucet 2010). Maternal gatekeeping can take many forms. Not only gatekeeping on the quality and type of care that fathers will give to the infant, but also through the implicit agreement amongst couples that the mother is the primary leave custodian. Thus, gatekeeping impacts the actual care provided in type and the care leave taking by fathers (Allen & Hawkins 1999; Fagan & Cherson 2015; Haas & Hwang 2008; Tu, Chang & Kao 2014; Zvara, Schoppe-Sullivan & Dush 2013). It influences through confidence of the mothers with the care their partners will give as an alternative to their care and secondly, when ring-fenced leave is not available, by the mother being considered the custodian of care. This can be structurally reinforced on the mother through policy. This can also manifest through mechanisms such as statutory policy defaulting only to the mother (such as in Australia) or though the provision of a 'family pool of leave' that both parents implicitly conceded should give mother care the priority (Brandth & Kvande 2009; Lappegård 2012). In this latter case, the mother's work hours and her return to work in the first place can play a substantial role in the distribution of care and leave take up across the couple (Baxter 2013b;

Baxter & Smart 2011; Johnson et al. 2013), and again highlight the interdependence between paternal decisions and the position of the mother.

In sum, the literature above shows that when fathers take up leave to be the primary caregiver, this decision is underscored by a myriad of influences beyond leave policy alone. There are likely to be other factors at play in the distribution of work and care across couples beyond policy. Access to policy, even very good policy, does not make it inevitable that fathers will participate in primary caregiving in Australia. The workplace, managers, and maternal influences on caregiving including hours of work, are also likely to be factors that fathers consider when making their primary care decisions and need to be considered in the present study. Highly-compensated, segregated, and non-transferable leave has been shown to be highly valued by fathers. It is decisive in take up of the leave in the first place but is not the only factor of influence (Haas & Hwang 2009; Sullivan et al. 2009).

The above literature paints a consistent picture of the main policy levers that fathers might consider crucial for leave taking as the primary carer. Given gender equality and return to work for mothers are central goals of the Australian statutory scheme, the gender-equality potential of our existing PPL scheme is highly relevant to the present research. As will be noted below, Australian policy may be found to be lacking on gender-equality potential and therefore fail to meet its gender-equality objectives.

How Gender-Friendly is Australia's National PPL Scheme?

How well Australia's PPL policy holds up on gender-equality measures is best examined by directly contrasting exemplar nations with the current Australian policy architecture. This will provide a realistic sense of how well the statutory PPL (as our most universally available paid parental leave for primary care) might support an equal share of care amongst parents and in the process, meet the full complement of its policy objectives. As the research outcomes noted below suggest, it appears that the Australian policy regime is lacking in terms of its potential to recalibrate the gendered division of work and care amongst parents.

In 2012, some 12 months after the inception of the statutory PPL scheme, the Australian Workplace Innovation and Social Research Centre undertook a gender equality analysis of international PPL policy including the new Australian policy framework (Broomhill & Sharp 2012). In line with the present thesis, this analysis draws on the assumption that progress on gender equality will be enhanced when fathers are substantially and specifically supported to participate in childrearing and primary care in particular (Broomhill & Sharp 2012). Based on the research from the Nordic belt, exemplar policies are those that seek to alter and support the patterns of gender relations within the home by enhancing the scope and visibility of father care entitlements. Drawing on the international literature on father care and gender equality, the researchers suggest 'gender equitable' models of PPL require the following characteristics:

1. A level of remuneration sufficient to allow parents, and men in particular, to participate in caring without experiencing a significant loss of income.
2. Allocation of a significant period of non-transferable leave for fathers on a 'use it or lose it' basis.
3. A legislated provision for greater flexibility in both women's and men's employment hours and conditions.
4. A legislative guarantee of job and career protection for those who take parental leave.

Table 1 (overleaf) highlights those nations that offer the policy provisions within their PPL architecture.

Though all policies emphasise and support men's participation in care specifically, there are considerable differences between particular policies. For example, if remuneration is considered in isolation, then Denmark, Norway, and Portugal appear to have the most generous offerings for fathers at 100% wage replacement. Of these nations, Norway and Portugal are perhaps the stand out nations given the remuneration schedule is uncapped. In terms of generosity of leave duration, however, Portugal falls short with only 20 days of 'daddy leave' compared to Norway, which provides 10 weeks of ring-fenced paid leave.

Iceland however, has considerably more leave for fathers overall with three months of paid leave but at 80% of previous earnings. Sweden also has 12 working weeks of paid leave at 80% of previous earnings. Sweden however has the added incentive for fathers to use all of their leave allocation via the

Gender Equality Bonus. Couples who share the primary carer leave components receive up to 3000 SEK (equivalent to approximately AUD$440). Sweden also has the bonus of a high level of flexibility in taking the leave amongst parents. Leave can be taken on a part-time basis for both parents until the child is eight years of age (Ray, Gornick & Schmitt 2009). Italy provides similar arrangements for parents in terms of leave flexibility but this leave is paid at a low rate of replacement (30% of earning for children under three) and the paid components are for a six months maximum (Ray, Gornick & Schmitt 2009). Italy also has a less than universal scheme with self-employed men (but not women) excluded from the provisions.

Table 1: Exemplar Nations for Father-Friendly Paid Parental Leave Policy

Country	Entitlement Total	Incentives for Fathers	Payment/Features
Iceland	Nine months total: Three months mother. Three months father. Three months family.	Segregated leave for fathers.	80% of earning (high level capped).
Finland	35 weeks family leave.	An additional 24 days of leave is provided if fathers take two weeks or more of family leave.	70% of earnings (high level capped).
Sweden	480 days: 60 days father. 60 days mother. 360 days.	60 days segregated leave for fathers on use it or lose it basis. Also, a Gender Equity Bonus for couples who share the leave taking.	80% of earning (high level capped).
Norway	56 weeks: Nine weeks mother. 10 weeks father. 37 weeks family.	10 weeks leave segregated for the father.	100% earnings if child is under three.

Country	Entitlement Total	Incentives for Fathers	Payment/Features
Denmark	32 weeks. Three weeks father.	Three weeks of leave segregated for father (industrial workers). Six weeks segregated for father (public sector employees).	100% of earnings (moderate capping).
Germany	12 months family leave.	Two months for fathers if they take leave after 12 months. (Father bonus extends leave total to 14 months).	67% of earnings.
Lithuania	Three years family leave.	Paid leave available to fathers after first 28 weeks.	70% of normal salary.
Portugal	21 weeks: 15 weeks family. Six weeks mother.	20 days of specific daddy leave (10 must be taken in the first months after birth).	100% of earnings (no cap) if parents share leave.
Italy	12 months: Six months mother. Six months father.	Additional 'papa months' available if father take three months of leave.	30% of earnings if child is under three.

Source: Broomhill and Sharp (2012, p. 3).

What is evident from this review is the increasing efforts of some nations towards actively supporting fathers to participate in the care of their offspring. Using the Broomhill and Sharp (2012) criteria, the contrast of these nations with the Australia's statutory policy is remarkable. On both duration of leave and remuneration levels, Australia falls far short of its OECD cohorts. There is a maximum of 18 weeks paid leave in the Australian PPL scheme at minimum wage. Other than the short duration paternity leave (paid at the same low rate), there is no special incentives for fathers to take the leave. Even Japan and Spain, relatively laggard nations regarding work and family policy, have some incentives in place to encourage fathers to take care-based leave.

As previously noted, legislated job protection may also be problematic for Australia's policy (criteria four on the Broomhill and Sharp model) with the positive right to return to work after leave provided within

an entirely different statute (Broomhill & Sharp 2012). The right to request flexible work arrangements upon return to work is similarly positioned. Both rights are covered under the *FWA Act* (*2009)*, not the *PPL Act (2010),* and importantly, they require different eligibility criteria.[5] Finally, there is no flexibility in the current statutory scheme in Australia. Leave can be transferred from the mother to the father but the leave must be taken in one complete block. On gender-equality measures, Australia's PPL policy is unlikely to contribute to a transition to a dual worker/carer gender order in Australia (Broomhill & Sharp 2012, p. 10).

Whilst Broomhill & Sharp have emphasised the characteristics of remuneration and leave segregation for men, other researchers such as Ray, Gornick and Schmit (2009) have attempted to quantify the potential impacts of these assets in addition to considering wider work and family policy provisions. The researchers' comparative review of PPL in 21 high-income countries developed an 'equity quotient' for analysis. This was constructed by developing a Gender Equality Index, rating each nation's parental leave policies on a 15-point scale where 15 indicates complete equality on both workplace participation and care giving in the home for both men and women. The scale is comprised of three core measures. Nine possible points allocated to the distribution of leave using the proportion of total leave available and/or reserved exclusively for fathers as the measure. A total of five points is allocated for level of wage replacement provided during the leave. The higher the proportion of pre-birth wages the higher the score. One further point (either positive or negative) is allotted to other policy incentives that specifically encourage men to take their available leave including employer or other government incentives and support (Ray, Gornick & Schmitt 2009).

Figure 3 below shows the relative ranking of 20 high-income nations using their Gender Equality Index. Australia is not included in this analysis because it was developed prior to the introduction of the PPL scheme.

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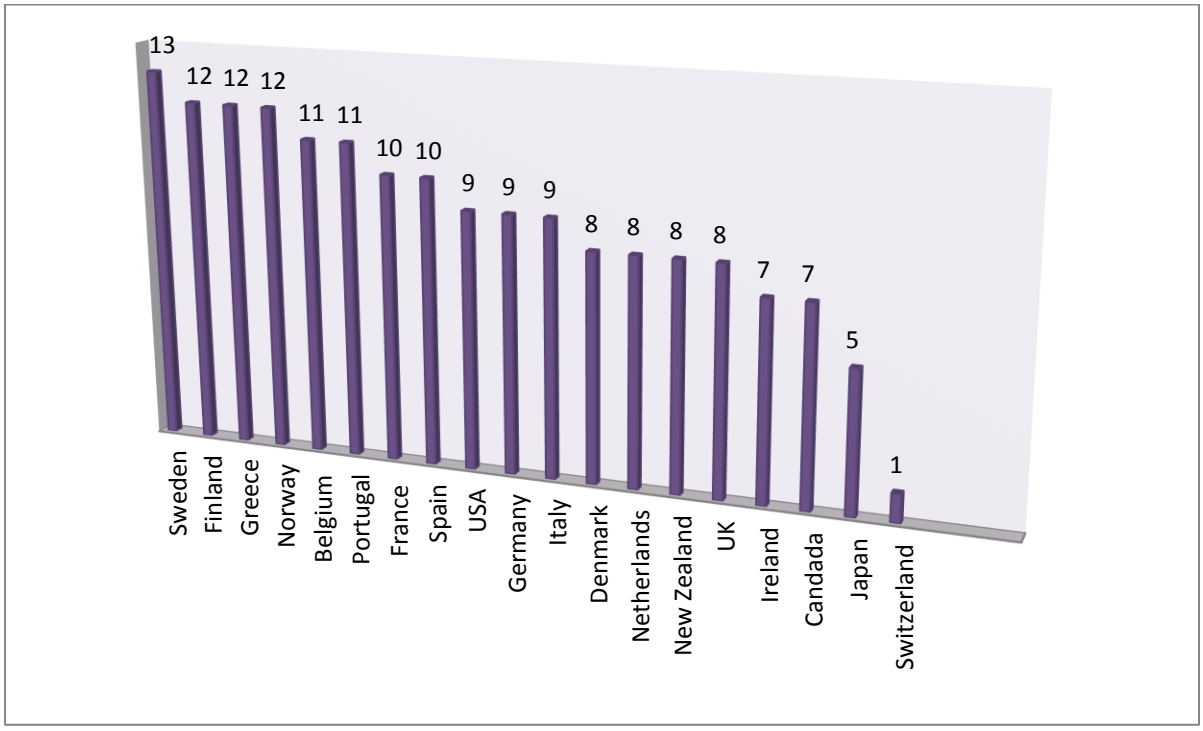
5 The *FW Act (2009)* requires 12 months of continual service to be entitled to the leave as opposed to the *PPL Act (2010),* which only requires employment for 10 months of the previous 13 months prior to birth. Since the right to request flexibility is attached to return to work from parental leave under the *FW Act (2009),* request for flexibility upon return to work is again precarious.

Figure 3: Gender Equality Index of PPL Policies in Selected High-Income Economies

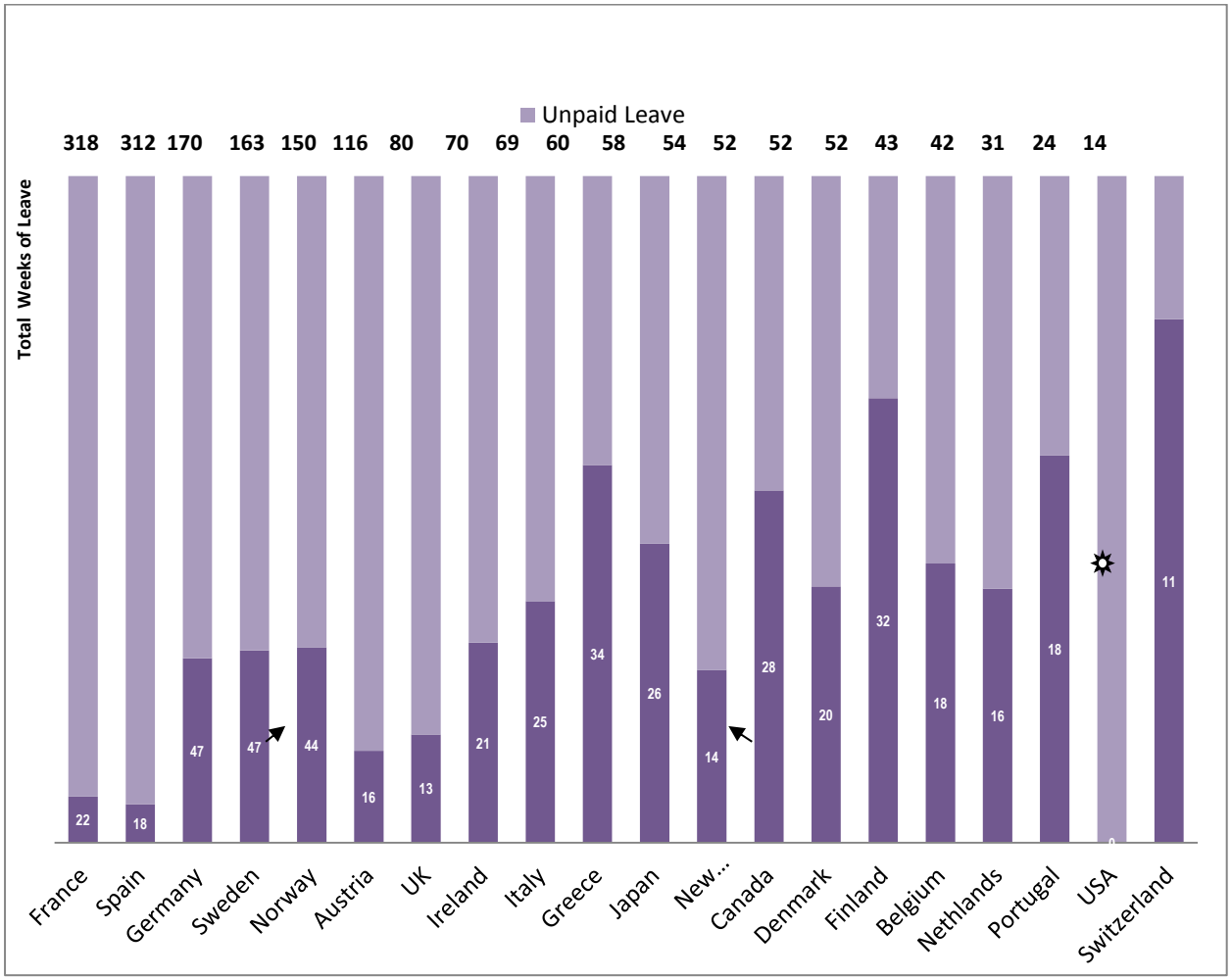


Source: Ray, Gornick and Schmit (2009).

Using this Gender Equality Index, Sweden, Finland, and Greece (because of the most recent reforms) are in the top three nations on measures of potential for gender equal caring. Japan, Switzerland, and Canada are at the bottom. A particularly enlightening analysis from this model is the contrast and comparison of nations on a broader range of measures. In this, we can see some dramatic changes taking place in overall ranking depending on whether the policy is measured on its gender equality potential or its overall generosity using a two-parent total leave measure.

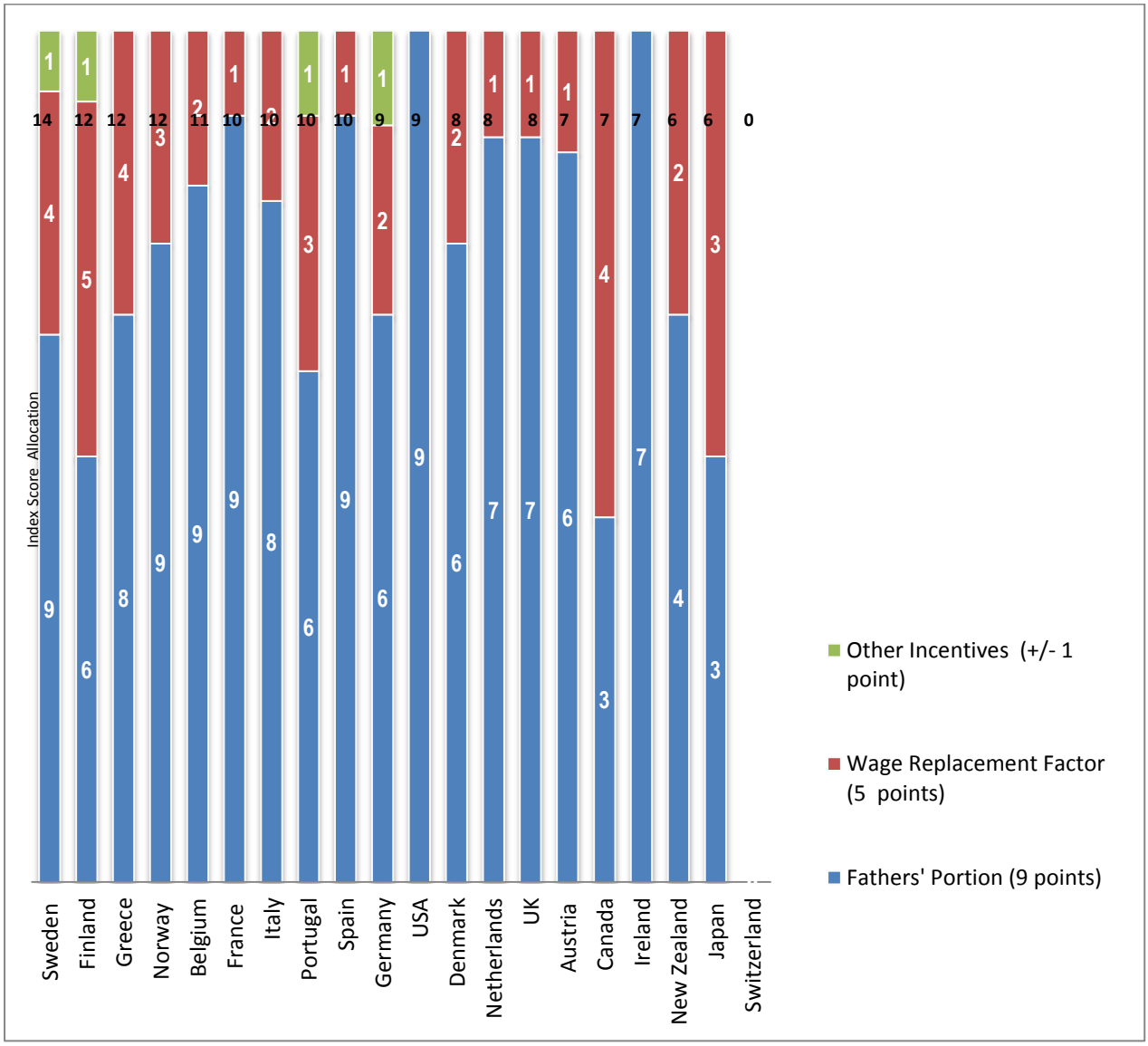
Figures 4 and 5 overleaf show the changes in ranking between nations when a more encompassing gender-equality measure is used.

Figure 4: Total and Full Time Equivalent (FTE) PPL for Two-Parent Families



Source: Ray, Gornick & Schmit 2009

Figure 5: Gender Equality Index



Source: Ray, Gornick and Schmit (2009)

On this basis, we see a nation such as Sweden for example ranked fourth on straight measures of overall leave available to parents, but in terms of the policy's wider equity potential, it rises to the top because it has a larger proportion of overall FTE leave that is segregated for fathers and specific support and incentive policies such as the Equity Bonus when fathers take up the leave.

Finland also rises substantially with its extra incentives to fathers to take the leave. Finland offers bonus weeks of paid leave when fathers take at least two weeks of the primary carer leave provisions (Ray, Gornick & Schmitt 2009). Conversely, we see nations such as New Zealand and Ireland who fall in the middle in terms of an overall parental leave provision but race to the bottom when measured on broader gender-equality measures. Although this analysis was conducted prior to the introduction of the statutory scheme, this later outcome suggests that Australia would result in a similar fall in ranking given the similarity with the New Zealand model with its low payment and lack of segregated primary carer leave for fathers (Department of Labour 2005).

Other researchers have attempted similar analysis – also constructing an equality index to facilitate comparison across countries on how well the policy provides for the needs of both parents. Smith and Williams (2007) developed a father-friendly index to categorise the content of parental leave policy across western European nations.[6] This model utilised similar categories of reference to Ray, Gornick and Schmitt (2009) above.

Smith and Williams (2007) used seven factors of influence to measure in their model - the segregation of leave amongst parent's leave, paid or unpaid nature of the leave, opportunity to use leave part time, eligibility conditions, generosity of specific paternity leave provisions, provision for emergency care, and degree of government support and encouragement. The researchers ran analysis on both a five and seven-factor model.[7] In terms of father friendliness of the policies, both the five and seven factor models show the Western Nordic nations (Finland and Denmark) scoring the highest (47/50) and those nations most like the Australian model of statutory PPL (in this case the UK) scoring the lowest on measures of 'father friendliness'. Subsequent analysis found that fathers in the Nordic nations spent considerably more time with their children than fathers in the other nations (Smith & Williams 2007).

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6 Western nations were Finland, Denmark, Netherlands, Belgium, Austria, Germany, Portugal, France, Greece, Italy, Spain, Ireland, Luxemburg, UK (Smith & Williams 2007).

7 The five-factor model dropped emergency leave and government support from the models as these were not strictly parental leave provisions (Smith & Williams 2007).

The above reviews have been particularly useful in understanding what provisions might be important to measure in the present study and provide an empirical basis for the assumptions that certain policy inclusions could result in the redistribution of work and care amongst couples. There are however some methodological flaws that should be noted.

Firstly, in the Ray, Gornick and Schmitt (2009) model the fact that the USA fairs similarly in both the FTE Ratio and Gender Index models is perplexing – calling into question the measure itself. Because the 12 weeks unpaid parental leave provided by statute in the USA is not transferable between parents, the scoring on this measure is the equivalent of the Swedish policy (both on nine points because they do not allow transfers of leave amongst parents but have a separate and specific leave entitlement). Sweden also has a policy of non-transference between mothers and fathers for designated leave but the actual leave structure is markedly different in terms of its ethos and generosity, and thus the policies are hardly comparable. In addition, the accumulative nature of the gender quotient is also problematic as the USA score on policy transference is not in any way impacted by the fact that the leave is unpaid (making it unlikely fathers will take up the leave) and totally undermining the gender equality potential of the policy. Using this type of measure means that nations are only able to differentiate themselves by payment rates and additional and specific incentives to fathers. This renders the nine-point scale questionable in its value and inclusion in the model and further explains why Australia (and not the USA) would fall so rapidly on this scale.

Both models are also rather arbitrary. For example, we have no way of checking if a score of five is only half as good as a score of 10 on a given measure in the Smith and Williams (2007) index. The same can be said for the Ray, Gornick and Schmitt (2009) model but it is particularly problematic in the former index because inferential statistical analysis has been conducted using the measure. Explaining variance for time fathers spend with their children via the father-friendliness index in this analysis is speculative at best.

Other researchers have attempted a similar analysis however, focus has again been on quantifying various policy elements and assessing the relationship between policies and gender equality outcomes.

Platenga and Hansen (1999) for example studied gender equality outcomes for 16 European countries using a composite indicator of paid and unpaid work amongst couples and various parental policy features. They used these to predict various gender equality outcomes for parents. Gornick and Meyers (2005) attempted a comparable analysis using a wider subset of policy indicators to construct an index of policy performance in 12 comparison countries from Europe. This analysis looked at several policy types including polices affecting children under and over six which is important in the present context because of interest in preschool primary care. The review measured various factors in parental leaves and work time regulation and not surprisingly, both analyses showed the Nordic nations to be at the forefront of policy development in terms of father care and/or greater gender equality in both parental leave and other policy offerings.

A line of continuity between the above subset of studies on PPL is not only the quantification of policy structures but in this case, they show case the modern trend towards aligning father-friendly terms and conditions with gender equality outcomes and measures.

The above methodological issues withstanding, these studies provide a robust picture of the impact of PPL on care distribution amongst couples. It is increasingly clear that straight comparison of policy provisions is less informative and precise when considering gender and the division of work and care. These analyses provide an opportunity to draw several reasonable conclusions in terms of the gender equality potential and impacts of our PPL scheme in Australia.

The continued emergence of the Nordic countries in all the comparative analysis of PPL cited here demonstrates a convergence of outcomes and opinion on father care. It is a site for gender equality in work and care. Denmark, Iceland, Sweden, and Norway have the most father-friendly leaves and the highest levels of paternal leave take up in the OECD, which has increased remarkably in the last 10 years as fathers have become a core focus of the policy objectives (OECD 2011, 2012). Those nations that have low flat rates of payment and no specific individual entitlements or incentives for fathers continue to demonstrate poor levels of paternal leave take up and use of flexibility in the workplace. This may have influence on women’s workforce participation and overall improvements in their relative

equity (Broomhill & Sharp 2012; Esping-Anderson 2009; Lappegård 2012; OECD 2011; Ray, Gornick & Schmitt 2009).

Given the similarity between the New Zealand and Australian models of PPL, we can expect little change in the distribution of work and care in Australia due to the introduction of our statutory PPL. In New Zealand, less than 1% of men took up leave under their statutory scheme even though they reported wanting to have more time with their child (Callister & Galtry 2006). This is the same as the take up rate up in Australia (Martin et al. 2012). The New Zealand model has been operational since 2002 and under the present architecture unlikely to alter the gendered patterns of care. The New Zealand experiences certainly suggest we can expect similar outcomes here in Australia.

In terms of the present study, the preceding analysis supports much of the existing critique on Australia's statutory PPL. This review suggests the Australian scheme is unlikely to impact on the gendered nature of care in contemporary families. Whilst Australia can now claim some differentiation from the USA by offering a universal and government-funded paid leave, the low flat rate of payment, lack of flexibility in leave provisions, and the absence of a designated father care component are significant omissions in terms of the policy's gender equality power. From the above evidence, it is reasonable to assume the present policy is unlikely to contribute to increased rates of primary care for men and the attainment of the third final policy objective for the scheme.

There is a smaller but growing body of knowledge that indicates PPL policy is not the only driver of shared care amongst parents, and other measures such as workplace culture, mothers' employment conditions, and fathers' attitudes to parenting also have some bearing on primary caregiving decisions amongst couples.

Additional Research Areas Needed

Attitudes

One final issue with regards to primary care and fathers is the notion of attitudes. Fathers may well be interested in caregiving but we simply don't know if this extends to primary caregiving. Sharing of

primary care responsibility would be required if the gender equality impacts of shared care are to be realised because it is the step back from the workplace for women and its corollary impact when they step back into work that exert the most powerful effect on women's life course trajectory.

As noted in the literature review above, much of the research in the policy domain that investigates paternal caregiving does so on the assumption that fathers have an 'interest' in primary caregiving. The researcher notes that most studies cite the changing attitude of fathers towards caregiving as sound basis for their investigation. Research on fathers and caregiving often begin with statements that express a greater desire by fathers to contribute to home life and caregiving. In North America for example, the Boston College Center for Work and Family has studied men and caregiving for several consecutive years. The New Dad research series notes:

> 'Fathers (want) to do meaningful work and live meaningful lives, to be effective as both workers and caregivers' (Harrington, Van Deusen & Humberd 2011, p. 5).

Closer to home, Australian reports are also opened with motherhood statements of fathers increased need and desire to care for children alongside their careers:

> 'Men want to contribute meaningfully to their families and their communities but they are reluctant to ask for greater work-life balance' (Page & Feenstra 2011, p. 11).

> 'Significant social changes have occurred in men's work and family/personal experiences over the past 30-40 years, triggering amongst men a growing interest in, and need to, access quality flexible work' (Russell & O'Leary 2012).

On closer examination, however, the data sets attached to these assertions fail to move beyond overall assessments of men's desires for participation. They do not highlight the actual level of caregiving fathers aspire to contribute and do not review desire in terms of primary caregiving in particular. Distinguishing the impacts between assisting mothers to care for the children and pursuing a discrete proportion of the primary caregiving responsibility for a child has yet to be undertaken in Australia. The international data indicates this distinction is critical both empirically in terms of definitions and

measures in cross national comparisons and in terms of the actual impact of leave on the caregiving and the caregiving need on required policy (e.g. the impact of paternity leave with the mother and primary care or solo care). Understanding fathers' attitudes particularly in relation to primary caregiving is vital and needed.

Flexibility

Much of the Australian data that we have on the interest from men in caregiving is cited from samples exploring flexible work practices and not primary caregiving. This has been informative in many respects but in terms of assisting the re-distribution of work and care amongst couples, deeper knowledge of flexibility is needed.

What we do know is that fathers do not generally adopt the structural leave practices such as working part time or compressed work weeks, for example, that would make shared care arrangements possible (Björk 2013; Björnberg 2002; Craig & Powell 2012). We also know that in spite of this desire for care they are not taking up parental leave for primary care even when available (Martin et al. 2012; Whitehouse, Baird & Hosking 2006). Thus, exploring the use of flexible work practices and how they might come to intersect with primary care and associated leave taking is essential. This must be explored at both the attitudinal (thinking and feeling) and behaviour (actual arrangements and decisions). This is another central undertaking of this thesis.

Chapter Summary

The above literature has been instructive in revealing the critical role parental leave policies have in developing a more equal distribution of work and care amongst Australian families. Policy alone, however, does not appear to fully explain primary care decision making amongst contemporary couples (OECD 2011). There is a much more complex array of factors and intersections that drive differences amongst couples, sectors, and nations than parental leave policy. These are evident even in the highly father-centric policy environments of the EU (Esping-Anderson 2009; Lappegård 2012; Orloff 2008). They move beyond highly-compensated leave segregated for the father and include mothers' and

fathers' work arrangements and workplace contexts (Björk 2013; Fagan & Cherson 2015; Haas, Allard & Hwang 2002; Radcliffe & Cassell 2015).

In terms of Australia we have not reached a level of knowledge to pursue the complex investigations of causation of father care that permeates the international arena. Whilst the international reviews have been informative in understanding what policies might influence fathers' pursuit of primary carer leave such as PPL and other changes to their patterns of work for care, and under what conditions, we must first also establish if they are interested in doing so and, if so, what exactly that means in terms of care in the context of work and the couple. Does more care mean shared care? Does more care mean solo care? Or does it simply mean more of the type of the assistance care fathers are currently providing? This level of knowledge sits within the scope of exploratory research and this is also the level of design for the present study (Alston & Bowles 2005).

The learning from the literature review has, however, revealed four main areas of knowledge to be pursued by the present study. These include understanding fathers' attitudes to primary care, current practices of primary caregiving and leave taking, drivers of current decision making on primary care, and ideal policy conditions to support shared care. These must be reviewed from fathers' perspectives if new information is to emerge and a blueprint for policy specific to Australia is to ensue.

Pursuit of these areas of interest will help determine how well Australian men are both equipped and inclined to participate in primary care and how they might fashion a more equal distribution of work and caregiving for their preschool children in their partnerships. Whilst there have been many calls for policy reform along the Nordic lines in Australia, it may be risky to expect an international model or ideal to automatically bear fruit here in Australia, when the evidence of success is still somewhat contested in its own country. There are strong indications that some of the policy architectures of the Nordic states may engender higher levels of participation in primary care for fathers, but they by no means show that father care and shared care for that matter is guaranteed by these policy platforms even in the socio-political environments that established them.

As Orloff (2008, p.6) has so aptly noted:

> ‘A great deal of writing on social policy and gender has extolled the existing policies of Sweden and to a somewhat lesser extent, of other Nordic countries, and have assumed that such policies could conceivably be extended to promote a more aggressively equal sharing of care work and paid work by men and women. And indeed, while these policies would dramatically change the landscape in the US, UK, Canada, Japan, Australia, New Zealand, and Continental Europe were they somehow to be enacted, these proposals are already quite familiar in Nordic nations which are such an important source for this style of policy thinking. Given how close these ideal policy institutions are already to existing practices in the Nordic nations one might ask why these countries are not much closer to gender symmetry and women’s emancipation than they are.’

This study is a first step in understanding what we might have to do to replicate the level of success in father care found in the Nordic nations. Success in this endeavour rests in understanding the unique experiences and undertakings of Australia’s working fathers first. We must establish if the lack of fathers participating in primary care is a matter of opt out or lock out, what we can reasonably expect from existing policy efforts to recalibrate work and care amongst couples, and under what conditions.

The next chapter continues this endeavour by placing the existing practices of fathers and caregiving under a more theoretical lens. Along with the preceding literature review, the next chapter further reveals the study strategy in terms of design and methodology, and later explanation of results and recommendations for change.

Chapter 4 Theory

This chapter outlines the theoretical models utilised in this study. Theory is used in this study in three ways. Firstly, to assist with the framing of the research questions under review in this thesis. Secondly, to scope and plan the data collection, and lastly, to analyse the results of the data collection. Pierre Bourdieu's Theory of Practice is used as the main theoretical model to position and contextualise existing knowledge on fathers, work, and caregiving. It will guide the data collection and later, contextualises the results. Teresa Rees' Framework of Gender Mainstreaming is also utilised, mainly to develop a credible model for generating change based on the results of this study. Rees' framework is the platform from which the main findings and the associated recommendations emerge. This framework of transformation would be useful for employers and institutions seeking to create a more gender-equal experience for their employees by supporting a re-distribution of work and care amongst working parents through both policy and process.

Much like Pierre Bourdieu himself, this thesis resists initiating a grand or explanatory model of work and family decision making (Jenkins 2014). It is not however, absent of theoretical consideration. Bourdieu's Theory of Practice (Webb, Schirato & Danaher 2002) and Rees' Gender Mainstreaming Framework (Rees 2005) are utilised as a series of 'thinking tools' for the researcher and the reader to operationalise the outcomes and phenomena observed in the literature and later, the findings from this study.

What is Theory?

Most methodologists and researchers agree that good research requires theory to guide and ground the study. However, what constitutes a theory and its use within the framework of a research project is itself a contested construct. Definitions of theory are highly dependent on the knowledge base and intended use (Fawcett & Downs 1987).

Scientific theorists tend to focus on the way in which a theory is established to define its meaning – concentrating on whether it is a replicable and methodical testing of ideas. This gives a theory its

‘scientific quality’ and the research itself a theoretical platform (Payne 2014). In contrast and writing from the sociological perspective, Johnson for example does not focus on the replicability of the research, but instead defines theory as a coherent framework that helps to make explicit the beliefs and assumptions of and within an individual’s behaviour (Johnson 2008, p. 8). Here the replicability of the theory is less important than the ability to explain a given behaviour in a cogent way. Extending this concept are scholars such as Payne, who takes an even more practical orientation to theory, positioning it as a generalised, but mostly ideologically, abstract set of ideas that firstly, describes our knowledge of the world around us and, by extension, imbues the definition of theory with a more practical quality that contributes to guiding and explaining practices and actual behaviour rather than predicting it (Payne 2014, p. 5). In other words, theory shapes what we understand people ‘do’ through linking the abstract with the concrete. It is this latter definition that most closely resembles the definition of theory used in this study, positioning theory as both a lens to examine, explain, and potentially predict practices. As noted above, both Bourdieu’s Theory of Practice and Rees’ Gender Mainstreaming Framework are the ‘thinking tools’ drawn on in this context.

The Role of Theory in Research

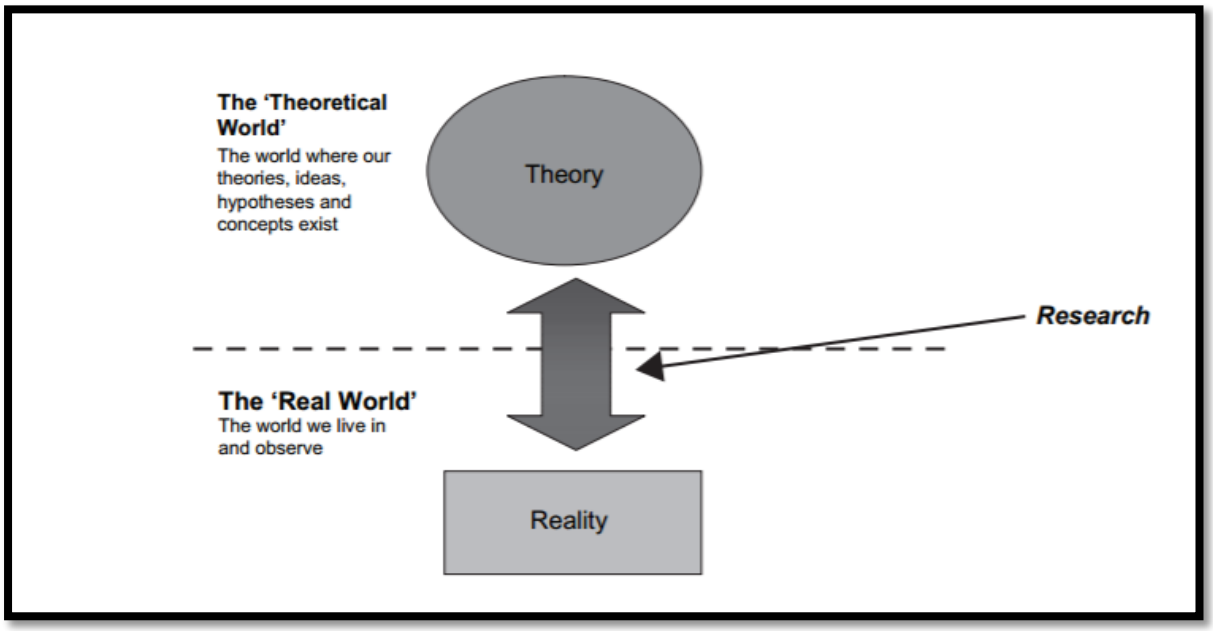
Regardless of its specific definition, theory is a common and expected, part of any sound research project. Whilst various scholars might emphasise different theories and even definitions of theory in their own research practices, there are several tenants commonly found with regards to the utility of theory in research (Crotty 1998; Grinnell & Unrau 2010; Grix 2002; Hesse-Biber 2010). The key themes identified are outlined below.

1. It can allow the reader to evaluate the findings of a study in a less subjective way by making the position of the researcher explicit and any of their associated bias in taking such a position.
2. It is a way of connecting the reader with the existing knowledge on the subject or phenomena under review both broadly and efficiently.
3. It can explain and express research findings making the boundaries and rationale of outcomes much clearer and positing future research scope and directions.

Thus, theory can provide a three-way support of a given research project. Under this guise it is used for more than just research methodology alone.

Applied to this study, theory has been able to assist beyond methodology. It helps build connections amongst sets of data and provides a useful 'story' about why acts, events, structure, and thoughts occur (Sutton & Staw 1995, p.378). In this way, theory is extremely useful for both the scholar and the reader in this instance because it embeds results from the data (new information) and the literature (existing information) in a context that assists understanding and bridges the gap between what we know and what we do. Lee and Lings (2008) depict this use of theory as a bridge between the abstract and the practical, theoretical, and concrete. This is as outlined in Figure 6 below.

Figure 6: The Theoretical World and the Real World



This application of theory is common in what is described as applied research, which has a largely practical aim that seeks to bring together theory and knowledge with systematic inquiry for a clear and practical purpose (Lee & Lings 2008). This is perhaps being more akin to what is often called the axiology of research. Lee and Lings (2008) describe axiology as the aim of a given research project. A research study's axiology sits somewhere on a continuum between a desire to explain and predict the

world around you, to seeking to just understand it (Lee & Lings 2008, p. 10). The writer argues however that one cannot be achieved without the other and a theoretical basis for research is a necessary but not sufficient grounds for investigation.

Flynn and McDermott (2016) consider theory much like this, likening it to a scaffolding in a large building project. Whilst scaffolding is not central to the building itself it is needed to do the work and has an impact on how the building (or in this case the research) takes place (Flynn & McDermott 2016, p. 28).

Sutton and Staw (1995) take their analysis a step further arguing that theory is not only helpful but a key element of the truthfulness of research results. They argue theory guards against what they have deemed 'brute empiricism'.

> 'Theory is about the connections among phenomena, a story about why acts, events, structure, and thoughts occur. Theory emphasizes the nature of causal relationships, identifying what comes first as well as the timing of such events' (Sutton & Staw 1995, p. 378).

In this way, theory is extremely useful for both the scholar and the reader because it embeds results in a context that takes them from the abstract to the practical. Theory allows findings to be steeped in more than just the data alone. It presents a platform from which to evaluate a given study and allows for the contextualisation of the data, its use and purpose, as well as that which might have come before and after (Sutton & Staw 1995).

This multi-faceted view of theory has been adopted into the present thesis. The use of theory beyond the methodological considerations explored in the next chapter are utilised in this study to provide some plausible rationales that will augment and organise the current state of knowledge on fathers, work, and care. It also provides a platform from which the researcher can ensure that the data collection captured data from the right places and on the most applicable topics by tapping into a plausible model of human social practice and latter policy making.

Finally, the theory base is used in this study to systematically explain and connect the underlying mechanisms of the study findings - bridging what fathers report they do regarding primary care with previous knowledge.

Pierre Bourdieu: Theory of Practice

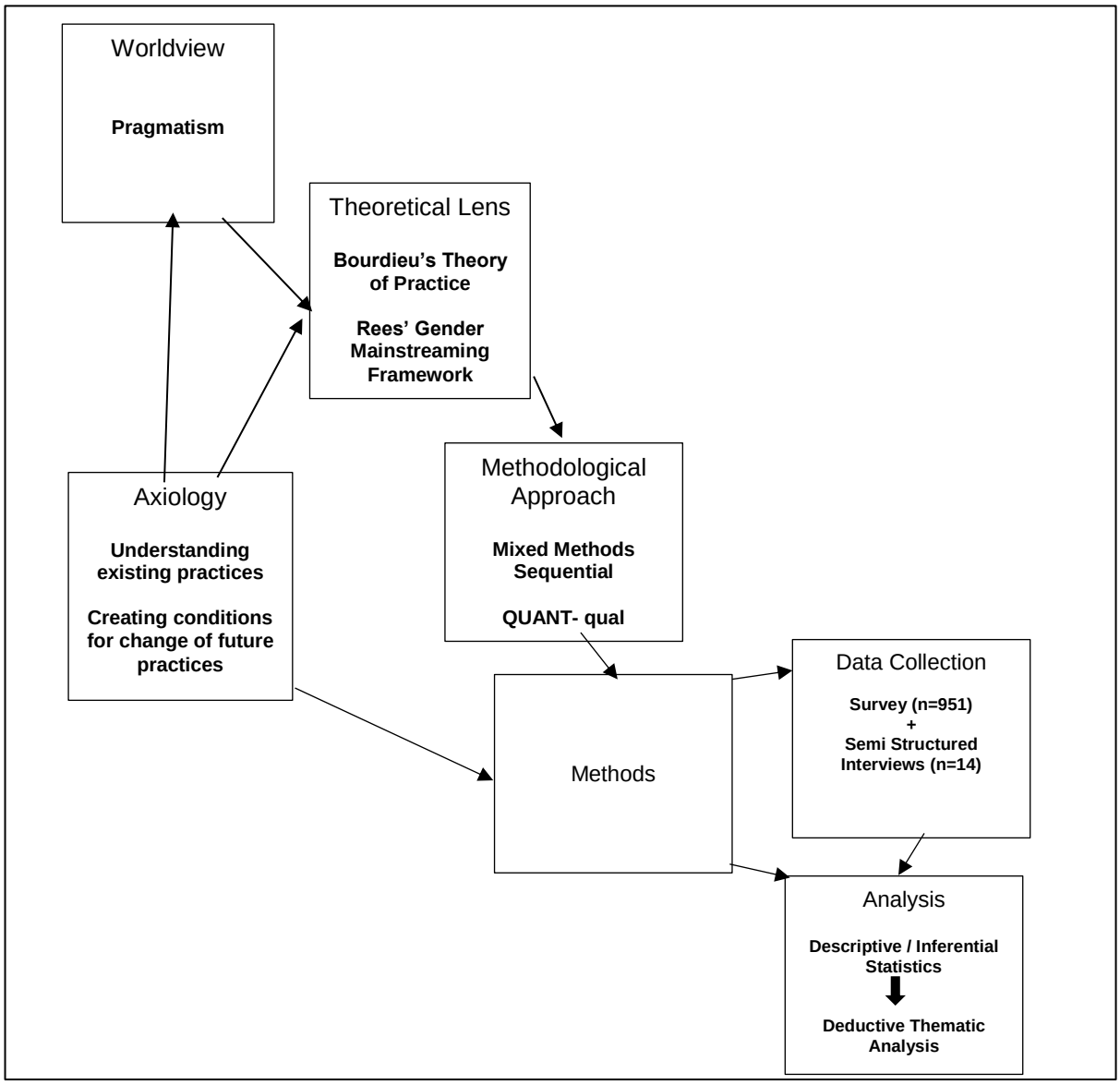
Pierre Bourdieu's Theory of Practice is extremely valuable and relevant to the present study. His work as a sociologist and theorist has been particularly influential in social research fields for a host of reasons but perhaps most importantly because his ideas offered a fresh perspective on knowledge itself and the previously dichotomous position of objective and subjective knowledges. In this broadened epistemology, Bourdieu essentially introduced the notion of both structure and agency into the examination of human practices (Jenkins 2014). Prior to this, such knowledge in an academic and an epistemological sense was left deeply embedded in an either/or paradigm where it was considered either subjective or objective in content, and where practice was explained through a unitary sense of the individual or the context and their associated ontological assumptions. This meant research and knowledge was no longer considered only as independent from the observer or entrenched in the lens of the observer. On this issue, Bourdieu argued that scientific knowledge was most likely a combination of both objectivities and subjectivities. He felt knowledge was produced because of what he termed a 'double structuring' of both objective and subjective artefacts that might emerge at the same time and in varying degrees.

> 'On the one hand, the objective structures that the sociologist constructs, in the objectivist moment, by setting aside the subjective representations of the agents, form the basis for (these) representations and constitute the structural constraints that bear upon interactions; on the other hand, these representations must also be taken into consideration particularly if one wants to account for the daily struggles, individual and collective, which purport to transform or to preserve these structures. This means that the two moments, the objectivist and the subjectivist, stand in a dialectical relationship (Bourdieu 1989, p. 15).

Applied to the present study, Bourdieu's understanding of knowledge and his theory of practice has been useful in assisting the researcher in the present study to understand the gaps identified in the literature review and steward those into a rational and cohesive set of data collection tools (such as the survey and the interview structure). Specifically, his theory assists in accounting for fathers' current practices in primary caregiving, the all but complete absence of fathers from the work and care research base, and the persistent lack of visibility of fathers as carers (and mothers as workers). These are the main conclusions drawn from the literature review. In short Bourdieu's Theory of Practice and his fundamental concepts of field, habitus, and capital, expose the realities and mechanisms of fathers and mothers on the field of work, and family (Maton 2003).

Bourdieu's theoretical influence on methodology in social research is also manifest in the present study. As might be expected from the above understandings of human behaviour, Bourdieu's position on knowledge, and his theory of practice aligns with and supports the use of mixed methods research (MMR), the chosen mode of inquiry for the current thesis. The mechanisms of this theory as they relate to methodology are outlined in more detail in the following chapter, however, for now, it is sufficient to note that Bourdieu's understanding and position on the nature of truth as both subjective and objective was a ground-breaking epistemological position for his time because the previously dichotomous qualitative versus quantitative debates could be reconciled within one epistemological position. Within this realm, it is the concepts of ontology and epistemology that come to the fore because in bridging the theoretical and the concrete, one's view of knowledge and how we can achieve it is inextricable. As Creswell et al. (2011) assert the chosen theory of a study must do more than align with the aims of the study, but by extension, fit within the epistemological frameworks that underpin the theory and in turn the related methodology. It must together form a platform from which to extend the actual data collection. Creswell et al. (2011) offer a way to conceptualise the relationship between theory, epistemology, and methodology and is depicted below in Figure 7. This shows how Bourdieu's Theory of Practice and Rees' Framework of Gender Mainstreaming align with the epistemological position of the researcher and alignment between this and the MMR approach of the methodology.

Figure 7: Relationships Between the Key Pillars of this Study



Source: Creswell et al. (2011, p. 39)

The relationships between these elements of the research and theory provide the reader and the researcher with coherent and connected set of 'sense-making' tools that point the way forward for this study including what to ask, who to ask, and what we can reasonably conclude from their responses.

Pierre Bourdieu offers a Theory of Practice that provides a tool or lens to view the behaviour and actions of couples in determining their primary care giving decisions. Bourdieu's framework includes both agency (how an individual operates) and structure (their context and platforms). He theorised that all human endeavour is made up of various degrees of these two factors (Webb, Schirato & Danaher, 2002). His theory of practice is predicated on the notion that human beings are primarily agents of their own behaviour and yet their agency is highly contextualised and therefore constrained by their social and cultural position within a given context. He argued that individuals indeed have agency and choices and this is reflected in their actions (practice) however, we must not forget that they do not 'choose the principle of these choices' (Webb, Schirato & Danaher, 2002, p. 125).

Components of Practice

Whilst Bourdieu's theories and analysis of human behaviour has been extensive, it is his Theory of Practice that has been particularly influential (Webb, Schirato & Danaher 2002). There are five key constructs of social practice that are highly relevant to the present study. These are the concepts of field, habitus, capital, symbolic violence, and doxa as outlined below.

Field

The notion of 'field' is a bedrock principle in Bourdieu's Theory of Practice. Bourdieu proposes that human life is characterised by people entering and operating on the various fields in which they operate. The field serves as both a background to (and overtime) the agent, individual and collective practices (Webb, Schirato & Danaher 2002). A field might include many different interactions and human endeavours including institutions and groups such as the fields of work, school, family, and similar. This is the context or structure/s in which all human activity and striving occurs. For this study, the fields of work and of home dominate analysis.

Habitus

'Habitus' is the central concept of Bourdieu's Theory of Practice. Habitus a part of the individual's agency, and Bourdieu posited that one's habitus is enacted in the context of that field. The behaviour or practice is observable and is also observed by those on the field. The behaviour of individuals,

groups, and classes in the field comes to be embodied by each of the individuals and culminates into what Bourdieu called the habitus (Vincent, 2016; Webb, Schirato & Danaher 2002). The habitus is essentially the behaviour of the individual – how the 'player' operates on the field, what they do, think, and enact. The closer one's habitus aligns with the rules of the field the more capital (power, resources, and status) one can accumulate. Importantly, the habitus is a largely unconscious sum of one's experiences, attitudes, and dispositions. This is often gained from feedback from the field itself but it is also shaped by experiences and their observations in other fields. The doxa-habitus connection is like a social learning process, and as Vincent (2016) notes below, both the habitus and capital have a time and place dimension.

> 'Social processes through which forms of capital are developed and transmuted contain structured aspects, with specific locations affecting the way resources may be deployed, and agential aspects, with individuals and groups having distinctive strategies in accessing and transforming resources in specific situations. Bourdieu deals with the analytically separable properties of structure and agency via the concepts of field and habitus, which also possess temporal dimensions' (p. 1167).

Thus, existing practices within a field have a powerful impact on the players. Practice reinforces the habitus through embodiment – itself highly dependent on the observation of others in their practice on the field. The adage 'when in Rome do as the Romans do' is highly applicable here. Specifically, players observe how one gains credibility and 'capital' on the field and emulate this to accumulate capital, and in the process, mute those practices that that are not part of the value system of the field. Importantly this means that unobserved practices would be unlikely to become part of the 'doxa' even if the formal rules, or what Bourdieu termed the 'orthodoxy', say differently (Webb, Schirato & Danaher 2002).

Doxa

A unifying concept of Bourdieu in his Theory of Practice is the notion of 'doxa'. At a theoretical level doxa is Greek for opinion, but in terms of Bourdieu's utilisation of the term in the Theory of Practice, it

moves far beyond opinion in the literal sense and edges closer to the realms of a law or force (Bourdieu 1989).

Within Bourdieu's Theory of Practice, doxa refers to a collective of rules that exist and influence the play on a field (Jenkins 2014). Importantly, doxa is known implicitly by players and remains a relatively unquestioned truth about the way things should be done on the field. The ability to follow the 'doxic rules' becomes closely associated with the allocation of resources and power through status on the field. In short, those that mirror and align with the doxa of the field, are more likely to be the higher status players on the field. This further reinforces the doxa itself through the veiled threat of status loss when deviating from doxa of the field. Within this collective adherence to the doxic value of a field lays both the restriction of power and reinforcement of practice, but it also holds the key to how one might bring about change within the field.

Applied to the current study then, we might consider the doxa to dictate the ideal worker norm of full time, highly visible, and always available to the organisation for production. Those who emulate this are those that will acquire the capital and status on the field and those that do not, become relegated to the sidelines. It is easy to see how doxa has manifested the higher status of men in general on the field of work and the underlying assumption that for women to succeed they must work like a man and keep caregiving to a minimum. Combined with habitus, doxa provides a lens through which we can understand the main features of the literature review.

The literature review was replete with examples of research data showing paternal take up of caregiving leave and primary care leave to remain minimal. Access to policy that promotes it might formally set out an entitlement to paid leave for fathers, however they rarely take up such leave in Australia. Not seeing other fathers in the workplace (field) take up PPL (and only seeing women do so) has a powerful influence on the practices of working fathers beyond their formal policy entitlements (orthodoxy). In this way, working fatherhood becomes defined and determined by those that go before them. Conversely, the literature also showed a proliferation of fathers taking the short term, concurrent leave with the mother to assist immediately after birth (Hosking, Whitehouse, & Baxter, 2010; Whitehouse, Diamond,

& Baird, 2007). This presents the other side of this PPL coin. Working fathers are expected and rewarded for taking this short leave and returning shortly to the 'field' of work. The practice of short-term leave after birth for fathers is cemented in the doxa (and the longer leaves for women), and it becomes the accepted practice of the field. Here we may be seeing a well-documented cycle of opposing forces where the practice of others drives the habitus of self and others through both inclusion (via emulating, visibility, and modelling) and the absence and exclusion of alternatives via the process of negative reinforcement. What is absent becomes as powerful as what is present.

Capital

A central aspect of the above process is the accumulation of 'capital' on the field, which is the central goal of all human endeavour according to Bourdieu (Vincent 2016). Whilst capital is accumulated in similar ways, there are numerous capitals operating on a field at any given time. Capital accumulated on the field can be financial or 'economic capital' (often a marker of status across fields) or may take the form of less tangible capital such as 'cultural' and 'social' capital (Pougnet et al. 2011). Cultural capital is defined by Bourdieu as a culturally specific set of tastes and attributes of value within a field whilst social capital is the accumulation of networks, contacts, and relational attributes applicable within a field (Webb, Schirato & Danaher 2002). Interestingly, neither of these capitals have any actual concrete value except that which is ascribed by players on the field. These capitals are nonetheless powerful tools for gaining status and credibility on the field. Status and power within any field relies on acquiring the right combination of capitals, and so having access to the right capital is critical for 'getting ahead' (Vincent 2016, p. 1176). To this end it is not just what you acquire on the field at a point in time but what you can access on the field in the future that is important because potential for capital accumulation (often based on un-interrogated assumptions) and actual capital determines one's overall status and ultimate gain. Status on the field is highly dependent on both potential access and gain. It is here we see why restriction of access on the field is so influential to status and is highly pertinent to the fields of work and care.

Another important aspect of capital within this theory is the process of change. Whilst social and cultural capitals can alter across time, they are highly resistant to change. Bourdieu observed that conflict does

sometimes occur within a field as the doxa or rules of the game are worked out amongst players. It is, however, often negotiated only by the dominant players who compete for their version of what could and should constitute capital and how that capital is to be distributed amongst the agents. In this process, Bourdieu noted that capital can change in value much like a currency but it is only as result of significant and prolonged disruption and conflict amongst the dominant players who already have power and capital on the field (Jenkins 2014; Webb, Schirato & Danaher 2002). Within this realm, it is clear how both patriarchy and matriarchy are preserved on fields. The field of work remains the domain of fathers; home the domain of mothers.

Finally, capital is not necessarily transferable across fields. This is a powerful aspect of Bourdieu's theory in terms of the current study because credibility and capital accumulation requires a completely different set of attributes with different doxa across the fields of work and caregiving. In this sense capitals can be highly autonomous and field specific. A doctoral degree for example may hold great status (cultural capital) in education or in some work fields but have very little value in the field of 'home'. Being fertile and the ability to bear lots of children may be an asset in certain 'family' or 'religious' fields, but have very little value in the 'workplace' field, and in some cases, be viewed as a negative. Cultural and social capital in one field may be neutral or can either elevate or undermine ones' capital in the context of another (Webb, Schirato & Danaher 2002, p. 11).

A final and related capital to consider in the context of the present study would be that of 'symbolic' capital. Bourdieu characterised symbolic capital as a culmination and collective of the various capitals operating within a field (Jenkins 2014). Symbolic capital is neither tangible nor is it easily defined. It is however a construct implicitly understood and recognised by players on a given field. Symbolic capital is often described as one's reputation or standing (Webb, Schirato & Danaher 2002). Vincent (2016) calls it prestige or renown. An individual's symbolic capital provides access to resources within the field and their legitimacy to be on the field in the first place. One's symbolic capital is highly related to the potential accumulation of status.

Applied to the understandings and knowledge revealed by the literature review, the notion of symbolic capital and its relationships with the concepts of field and doxa may in some way explain why there remains a persistent gender pay gap and gendered disadvantage, such as lack or proportional representation in government and other leadership positions (Adema & Whiteford 2007; AHRC 2009). The juxtaposition of cultural capital between the fields of work and home highlight the struggles working parents have had in accumulating status and capital on what are highly gendered fields. These afford higher status to men at work and to women at home. As the literature review noted the ideal player on the field of work, for example, does not have caregiving responsibilities, or at the least, caregiver responsibility that would not materially interfere with their availability to work. This by extension is a role assumed to be that of men to the point where being male on the field of 'work' is a status-building factor; there is more potential for labour and this has value on the field. Under the mantle of Bourdieu's notion of symbolic capital, women would be considered less reputable as legitimate players in the field of work. Their caregiving responsibilities reduces their potential and access to capital raising endeavours. Thus, access and resources on the field of work are not as readily distributed or available to them. Conversely, symbolic capital is also a potential influence on the previous findings arising from the Nordic nations on PPL that show fathers tend not to take from a family pool of leave. It may be that working fathers do not (and are not viewed) as legitimate players on the field of caregiving and thus the allocation of resources including parental leave to carry out the care are not in the fathers' favour. Fathers define such leave as a resource of the mother that they may have access to if bestowed by the mother, but she is the custodian because she has the greater potential for caregiving. This embodiment of the doxa here in this example can also be considered a form of 'symbolic violence' towards fathers on the field of caregiving (Webb, Schirato & Danaher 2002).

Bourdieu defined 'symbolic violence' as a denial of resources, being excluded (through action or bias) or being treated as inferior within a given field as a kind of violence towards another player on the field (Webb, Schirato & Danaher 2002). Symbolic violence has implications on both the agency and structure of practices and has a two-fold effect on the field and one's habitus. Firstly, the effect of symbolic violence is that the individual has restricted or conditional access to capitals which in turn hinder their

attainment of status and power on the field and (importantly) the ability to ‘change up their play’. Secondly, this violence signals to others on the field the negative consequences and impact on their own access to capital when their practices fail to align with the dominant doxa of the field. This reinforces the un-interrogated agreements as to what capital and resources will be distributed within the field and to whom (Vincent 2016; Webb, Schirato & Danaher 2002). Symbolic violence is closely associated with the concept of misrecognition under Bourdieu’s theory, in that symbolic violence can often occur simply because agents are unable to recognise they are being denied resources. They do not see this as an injustice. They accept their position on the field because it is according to the doxa and in alignment with the predetermined rules of the game to which they feel no legitimate claim to influencing (Webb, Schirato & Danaher 2002). It might therefore feel like the way things are on the field and across practices are ‘natural’ and an accepted unfolding (Webb, Schirato & Danaher 2002). Viewed in this way symbolic violence operates similarly then to Marx’s false consciousness (Jost 1995). Symbolic violence is indeed inflicted on players through the doxa and un-interrogated habitus of self and others however, the ‘violence’ is also reinforced through the disempowered agents on the field who become complicit agents of this through their unconscious acceptance. This reproduces the inequality/domination/deprivation cycles.

One can observe the possibility that this theory outlines an accurate depiction of the practice of fathers, work, and caregiving when considering the outcomes of many, if not most, of the empirical studies noted in the literature review. Here we found numerous studies citing both parents in varying degrees hoping to make different choices and share the care but (using Bordieuan terminology) are structurally denied (and unconsciously deny each other) access to the resources and capital that might support shared care as well as the reinforcement of existing practices on the field. Misrecognition and symbolic violence abound.

Taken together these concepts make up several of the main theoretical tenants of the current study and have informed the data collection by insisting both objective and subjective accounts of primary care decisions are examined – denoting the multi-methods methodology of the research. It also recommends the exploration and analysis of the data include interrogation of discrepancies between attitudes and

behaviour (practices) and the more intra-psychic aspects of those practices, the way in which they are negotiated and traded amongst couples, and in their employment contexts. Finally, both elements of agency and structure are to be interrogated in analysis of the decision-making process.

Gender Mainstreaming – Teresa Rees

In addition to Bourdieu's Theory of Practice, Teresa Rees' Framework of Gender Mainstreaming (Rees 2005) provides an additional level of analysis to enable exploration of the continued tension between gender, work, and care noted in the literature review. The literature review noted several gaps and disparities when it comes to the distribution of work and care amongst couples. It especially highlighted the common place experience of discrimination at work for employees unable (or unwilling) to fulfil the ideal worker norm despite several decades of policy and law which prohibits such discrimination and disadvantage. It is also worth noting that these interventions were developed to eliminate and ameliorate these same issues (Deutsch 1999; Esping-Anderson 2009). This strongly suggests that existing interventions, particularly as they relate to policy reform within our organisations and institutions, have not been entirely effective in recalibrating work and care amongst couples. Mothers and fathers both express the need and aspiration for greater sharing of the work and caregiving load after birth, yet each experience ongoing disadvantage and discrimination at work and both overt and covert policy barriers should they seek to do so.

Rees' analysis of gender equality and her mainstreaming framework not only offers an additional 'thinking tool' through which we can examine existing shortfalls in provision and protection for working parents in their primary care arrangements, but is also informative and valuable for the development of plausible suggestions for remedy and reform.

Tinkering, Tailoring, and Transformation

Gender mainstreaming is:

> '…a strategy which aims to bring about gender equality and advance women's rights by infusing gender analysis, gender-sensitive research, women's perspectives and gender equality goals

> into mainstream policies, projects and institutions' (Association for Women's Rights in Development 2004, p. 1).

Whilst other definitions of gender mainstreaming exist with slightly different emphasis, achieving equal outcomes for men and women is the overarching goal of the gender mainstreaming remit (Moser & Moser 2005). Gender mainstreaming strives for equality in outcomes. It relies on a systemic approach to review and reconfigure policy and processes for this specific outcome (Rees 2005).

Rees' analysis of gender equality and her corollary framework for mainstreaming gender has identified three main modes of change that can be examined in the strategies and programs institutions have employed to carry out their gender equality remit. Rees called these various modes tinkering, tailoring, and transformation. Importantly, Rees posited that only one of the modes has the necessary depth of disruption to augment change to the traditional and highly-gendered reconciliation of work and care amongst contemporary couples (Rees 2005).

Rees considers progress on the gender equality project to date is centred on rather peripheral changes. The strategies utilised in these endeavours are what she calls 'tinkering' strategies. Tinkering is defined by Rees (2005) as a tidying up of policy or law in ways that appear to provide procedural fairness and access, but do very little to establish an equal outcome or to change existing barriers and inequity. An example relevant to the present study is the in-principle access to the statutory PPL scheme by fathers, or the gender-neutral PPL policies provided by some of the participating employers. These policies would in theory allow both mothers and fathers to access a paid form of primary carer leave and in doing so present a procedurally 'fair' and equitable policy but do little to ensure equal access to the leave because they fail to address the barriers to take up for fathers. The legislative strategies carried out in Australia, such as the *Sex Discrimination Act (1984)*, which seek to prohibit discrimination based on gender, would also be considered a form of tinkering. They prohibit certain behaviours but do little to progress the intent of the legislation as an outcome.

'Tailoring' is another level of change examined by Rees that again falls short of the depth required to alter the gendered contract of work and care. Tailor-based strategies involve the addition of extra

provisions for one or another group to promote equality of outcomes between men and women (Rees 2005). These changes are predicated on a deficit model where each gender has specific rights and privileges intended to even the score, so to speak. Tailoring goes further than tinkering because special provisions are sometimes given to one gender over the other to equalise outcomes and recognise a set of unique conditions. An historic example of tailoring in work and care policy would be the 1966 revocation of the marriage bar within the public service. This legislation no longer required women to resign from their position in public service when married ensuring women could keep their jobs after marriage just like men. Affirmative action and quotas policies are other examples of tailoring. This includes the introduction of paid maternity leave in the public service in 1973 which was (and still is) a special provision policy only accessible to women (Bryson 1987). Tailoring strategies recognise the differences of men and women and seek to create an acceptably equal experience by compensating, protecting, or preserving one group over another in the hope that doing so would even out the access and opportunity deficits.

One of the biggest criticisms of tinkering and tailoring strategies is the fact that such strategies are predicated on a male standard and do not address the issues that drives gender inequality in the first place. As Rees noted, the motive of tinkering and tailoring reforms is largely remedial, seeking to:

> '…address gaps in women's experiences or skills, so better to equip them to compete with men (but) in races where rules have not been designed with them in mind. In other words, male norms are still accepted as the gold standard' (Rees 2005, p. 559).

Gender mainstreaming researchers argue that gender mainstreaming itself is in some cases a tinkering and tailoring exercise and largely ineffective on its own. Porter and Sweetman (2005) for example, brought attention to this by noting two kinds of gender mainstreaming applications. One type was considered an integrationist framework that sought to mainstream gender by attaching it to existing policies and structures. The second, a more transformative, or some would say radical approach to gender mainstreaming, which researchers such as Rounaq Jahan call an 'agenda-setting' mainstreaming approach (Porter & Sweetman 2005, p. 2).

These researchers and others have argued that it is only the second approach that has any change value because the integrational approach only addresses disadvantage from a women's issues perspective, and in a way that positions women as a marginalised group that needs a remedy. By extension, this approach asserts fitting women and their special needs into the existing norms, development projects, or agendas. The agenda-setting approach is structurally different. It begins with a thorough gender analysis that identifies and exposes the inequalities between men and women, deconstructs them, and then rebuilds and reframes them bringing about more equal outcomes by capacity building for equality and addressing the very roots of sexism and inequity (Porter & Sweetman 2005, p. 3).

This conceptualisation of gender mainstreaming at a practice level has been supported by several other scholars including Rees (see for example, Mackay & Bilton 2000; Moser & Moser 2005). Rees' framework is an analysis, more akin to the agenda-setting paradigm noted by Jahan because it focusses on transforming and addressing the source of inequality and eradicating it in daily practices rather than changing existing ones (Mackay & Bilton 2000; Porter & Sweetman 2005).

There is evidence to suggest that transformative strategies such as Rees' Gender Mainstreaming Framework, for example, can achieve improved gender equality precisely because they have, at their centre, the above noted goals and sensitivities (Mackay & Bilton 2000). Reviews of gender mainstreaming achievements have been undertaken by several researchers including Mackay and Bilton (2000), and Moser and Moser (2005). Both reviews found application of gender mainstreaming as a platform for achieving greater gender equality across a range of measures, cultures, and projects. A line of continuity in findings across these reviews and particularly in those projects arising from Canada and the Nordic nations, is the capacity-building aspects of the programs where people are moved from 'getting' equality to putting in place the structures that will guarantee it (Rees 2005). Importantly, especially for Rees, the most effective gender mainstreaming programs include valuing difference and positive action strategies (tinkering), and equal treatment approaches (tailoring). They are not obsolete as such but are the starting point of transformation (Rees 2005). For Rees, effective

mainstreaming relies on tinkering and tailoring because these establish the value of diversity and difference.

> …However, the aim in gender mainstreaming, or 'transforming' is to develop systems and structures which not only value difference but which no longer underpin hierarchies and power relations based on gender (p. 559).

This observation is echoed in the reviews undertaken by other scholars such as Moser and Moser (2005) who found it was the depth of the strategies that determined a program's success rather than their breadth. In their analysis of 14 gender mainstreaming projects initiated since the Beijing Platform for Action in 1995, they found that most organisations had put the gender mainstreaming policies formally in place but few had taken the next step in terms of implementing them or measuring their success as a more equal standing between men and women (Moser & Moser 2005). Moser and Moser argue that the policy and terminology of gender mainstreaming is readily found in many gender equality projects since Beijing however, substantial changes such as partnering with other organisations, implementing mainstreaming into budgets, and other knowledge resources were not readily found in the projects under review.

Mackay and Bilton (2000) found similar atrophy of practice in their analysis. They undertook a systematic review of the international applications of gender mainstreaming through major development agencies and international aid agencies. They concluded that many if not most of the non-government organisations (NGOs) and government agencies that participated in their review tended to stop short of implementing their policy intentions and even fewer went on to measure their success. The researchers conclude that these surface changes have undermined gender mainstreaming as a process for recalibrating gender disadvantage. Evidence of projects and organisations moving into the implementation stage was considered 'patchy'. The researchers claimed they did not move far enough towards the type of transformational changes required under Rees' model:

> ‘Turning to the implementation of gender mainstreaming, most efforts are considered inconsistent, and generally involve only a few activities, rather than a coherent and integrated process’ (Moser & Moser 2005, p.15).

Thus, the direction of change is valid, but depth is often lacking in gender mainstreaming approaches. This has undermined their credibility as tool of change.

The above evaluations give credence to Rees’ position that the gender mainstreaming framework demands a focus on structural transformation. Rees’ own review of gender mainstreaming projects found that gender mainstreaming is very effective for generating change, providing it goes beyond the tinkering and tailoring levels noted by the above researchers. Rees argues that the depth and breadth of the gender analysis inherent in a transformational design naturally leads to the structural changes that inhibit the resurrection of gender disadvantages when left at the tinkering and tailoring stage.

In terms of application to the present study, Rees’ Framework of Gender Mainstreaming will provide both a level of analysis and explanation to help point the way forward for change in the future by incorporating transformational levels of change into the gender mainstreaming remit. As the literature review has noted, the persistence of the gender pay gap, lack of proportional representation of women in positions of influence in business and government, the feminisation of poverty, higher experiences of violence, underemployment, and other critical markers of social disadvantage all demonstrate individually and collectively, the impotence of current change strategies and perhaps especially highlight the impotence of law and policy alone to engender structural change. The research questions of this study emerged from a literature review that suggests many of the strategies put forward to address gendered disadvantage and those that specifically relate to work and care have not been effective. Rees’ definition of the three levels of change calls for transformation, but the remedies applied to the issue thus far firmly rest with tinkering and tailoring.

Applying this lens to the current state of the PPL system indicates tinkering rather than transformation is the outcome of the strategies deployed to address the gendered distribution of work and care to date. At the government level, PPL has been developed and implemented nationwide, however, the

architecture of the policy is such that it provides a level of procedural fairness and equity, but with no transformative change at a deeper level. For example, the statutory PPL policy in Australia is technically open to both mothers and fathers but the policy automatically defaults the payment to the mother. The evaluation of the PPL implementation indicates that fathers who attempted to change the way in which the paid leave was distributed amongst the couple had great difficulty doing so (Martin et al. 2013). These fathers noted that the policy and the practice were two very different things. The statutory PPL scheme appears to offer procedural equity, but is far from producing the transformative equality required or achieving the goal of gender mainstreaming approaches. This would require the complete removal of the default parent payment mechanism for example and the restructure of the policy and its implementation to a configuration that allows each parent to have an equal chance of taking the leave to be the primary carer. The rate of pay is an obvious barrier to this end and together suggest that this policy may indeed be 'tinkering'.

An example of what Rees calls tailoring is found in the provision of employer-generated parental leave. This too is often open to both mothers and fathers at a policy level. It is often expressed in gender neutral terms such as 'primary caregiver' or 'parental leave' and was originally designed to create a more level playing field for men and women by firstly allowing women access to a longer duration of leave to attend to their caregiving needs without losing their existing workplace position and then later, parental leave was positioned as a way for fathers to have access to a leave for caregiving that sat separate to existing 'maternity' leave conditions. The literature has shown even in the most egalitarian policy regimes, fathers are not keen on taking the leave if it is structured in such a way that it is part of a general pool of leave available to either parent (Haas 1990; McKay & Doucet 2010) so the policy is in effect only a tailoring strategy because it is accepting the differences between men and women – adopting the same but different approach. It fails however as a viable strategy in terms of gender equality because it does not address the unique needs of fathers to a legitimate leave of their own. This is a strategy that would likely increase up take of the leave and in turn, engineer a more gender equal distribution of work and care. Without this latter step the strategy will fall short of transformation and merely reproduce existing gender disadvantages at home and at work.

Chapter Summary

The integration of theory into the present study has enhanced understanding of the current state of knowledge on gender, work, and care. It has offered a lens through which we can observe the current practices of parents in fashioning their work and care arrangements and anticipate the potential explanations of those decisions.

Bourdieu's Theory of Practice and the concepts of field, habitus, and capitals (particularly symbolic) suggest that current practices amongst parents may be largely unconscious and less governed by needs and aspirations for the care of their children. It posits that they may be more influenced by what they are already doing and the associated expectations at work and in the home. Within Bourdieu's theory, this places emphasis on the role of the players on the field (employees) who are all locked into a cycle of enacting highly-gendered roles and experience differential access to the status and capitals that could engender a more equal, shared care giving arrangement.

Bourdieu's Theory of Practice also speaks to the methodology of the present study. His Theory of Practice could assist in explaining the absence of fathers from the sampling frames of previous research on primary caregiving decisions. This theory suggests that fathers may have been considered spectators rather than players on the caregiving field, or at least largely invisible on the field of play as an earner/carer. This is a position dominated by women.

Bourdieu's analysis further lends credence to the use of a mixed methodology in the present study with both qualitative and quantitative methods required to capture both the structural and intra-psychic aspects of the actual decisions and outcomes of fathers and their caregiving as well as their intentions, experiences, and other subjectivities. The dual nature of both objective and subjective experiences supports the use of mixed methods in this study and are suggested as the vehicle to explore the decisions and multi-faceted 'truths' of this phenomena in more complete depth and breadth.

An additional theoretical lens useful in the present study has been Rees' gender mainstreaming framework and her corollary analysis of policy reform on gender equality. Review of the literature

through this perspective indicates that current policy measures that might assist fathers to share care with their partner may not have gone far enough in altering the deeply entrenched patterns of work and care behaviour in contemporary families. To use Rees' terminology such efforts have stayed in tinkering and tailoring. As the evidence suggests without the additional step of including a deeper transformation with requisite attendance to structural change that permeate all aspects of an enterprise and its processes, any real change in the distribution of work and care will be minimal and a gendered experience will persist. This framework has provided a logic for assessing the status of women at work and the lack of paternal primary caregiving examined even in the presence of paid leave to do so.

I return to the above mentioned theoretical models in Chapter 8. These are used once more as 'thinking tools' to help come to terms with the results of this study.

Chapter 5 Methodology

This chapter outlines the methodology and rationale for the present research. This study adopts an exploratory level design and a mixed-method, sequential framework. This was grounded in the research tradition of 'pragmatism' – an epistemological position that encompasses the collection of both quantitative and qualitative data via more than one method. This is consistent with the theoretical lens of this research introduced in the previous chapter in that Bourdieu's Theory of Practice can conceptually hold both quantitative and qualitative methodology simultaneously. The data draws on survey insights from 951 primary-earner fathers. Further evidence was then gathered from 14 semi-structured interviews with a sample of survey respondents and their partners. The strengths and limitations of the research design are outlined in this chapter along with the ethical and methodological characteristics considered for the final research design. From these analyses, the writer asserts the methodological rigour of the study's mixed methods design. It presents a sound, 'fit for purpose' research framework, which effectively exposes a valid and meaningful snapshot of Australian fathers' work and care aspirations in the context of the workplace and the home.

The purpose of this study is to explore the primary caregiving arrangements amongst contemporary couples in Australia. It has a specific focus on parental leave and related policy, the workplace context, and their impact on the arrangements made by working fathers. As a group, fathers have been under researched within the work and care domain. This oversight is one of the main rationales for the focus on paternal decision making in the present study. The study seeks to answer the following research question:

According to primary earner fathers, what are the barriers and enablers to shared primary caregiving amongst parents during the preschool years?

In addition to the primary question above, there are four subsidiary research questions. These correspond to the main gaps in the work and care knowledge base for fathers that emerged from

the literature review. These include knowledge gaps at the individual, couple, and workplace level in terms of broader influences on the decisions of contemporary fathers and their subjective experiences of these influences. Subsidiary questions include individual, work, and couples' contexts within the specific policy that previous literature has strongly suggested influence decisions on primary care. Questions include:

- Attitudes and beliefs: What are fathers' attitudes and beliefs regarding work and caregiving?
- Ideal policy conditions: What are father's ideal policy conditions to engage in primary care arrangements with their partner?
- Existing work and care arrangements: What do fathers do in terms of leave practices and adjustment to their pre-birth work pattern to accommodate caregiving?
- Explaining and identifying gaps between the ideal and actual primary care arrangements: How do fathers explain differences between their ideal and actual caregiving arrangements in the context of their workplace policy and their partnerships? How are the decisions negotiated in these contexts?

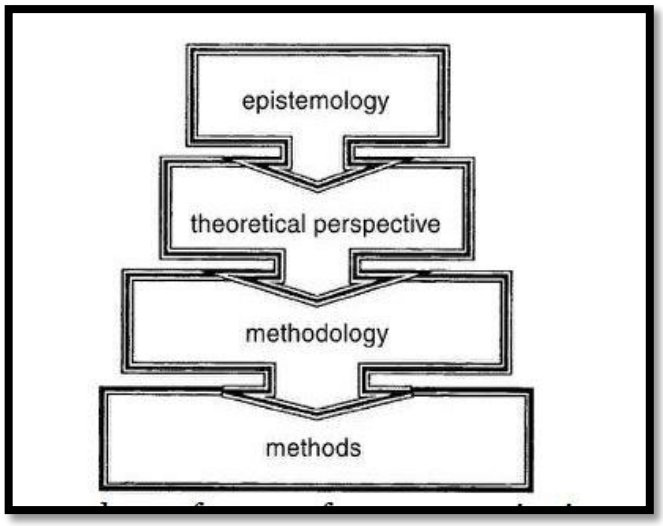
The nature of the above research questions and what might be required to answer them have ultimately driven the research design of this study. This is the essence of the MMR design of this thesis. No research, including MMR, occurs in a vacuum however. As noted in Chapter 4, the position and worldview of the researcher always plays a role in the scope and structure of the research design. Making the world view of the researcher explicit highlights both the influences on the central pillars of the research design and is a critical step in the research process because research is essentially an interpretive endeavour (Conway 2014).

The Role of the Worldview in Research

The present study adopted a MMR design entailing both quantitative and qualitative elements. MMR designs are highly driven by the research questions where the methods and design emerge from the demands of the questions themselves (Creswell & Clark 2007). This sits in contrast to more traditional research approaches however, where the research methodology and corollary

design and method decisions emerge from an ontology and epistemological position from which certain and expected methods arise. This understanding also implies a sequential movement of the researcher from ontological and epistemological considerations of the area of interest through to the selection of the research methods for the study. This transition is depicted in Figure 8 below.

Figure 8: The Process of Research Design



Source: Crotty (1998, pg. 13).

The premise of this approach is that a researcher's world view theoretically, as well as practically, drives the choices they make throughout the research process and, perhaps especially, their selected research methodology (Crotty 1998). Under this perspective, the worldview of the researcher has a strong influence on the questions asked, the methodology, interpretation of results, and framing of the research problem (Biddle & Schafft 2015; Hesse-Biber 2010, p. 30). Thus, making one's philosophical research position explicit as part of the initial stage of the research process is thought to assist the researcher as much as the end user of the research because it provides a frame from which to deliver and assess credibility of the research results, and makes the various influences and perhaps omissions more explicit, and therefore, more defensible (Giddings 2006).

Within this realm, there has been an historical demarcation of research paradigms into subjective and objective, interpretive and positivist standpoints. Each with their various strengths, weaknesses and importantly, taken for granted assumptions (Hesse-Bieber 2010). Advocates of a 'paradigm-driven' research design stress the importance of alignment between the epistemological position of the researcher, its core assumptions and, the research methodology. This understanding advocates moving through the prescribed 'levels' of knowledge, beginning with the researcher understanding their own theoretical position on the nature of truth, knowledge, and how to find it. Smith and Heshusius (1986) explain:

> 'The phrases 'research has shown ...' and 'the results of research indicate ...' are subject to different interpretations, given (the) different paradigms … it raises serious questions about the meaning of the results' (p. 11).

However, not all researchers share this view and especially not those that endorse MMR design. There is some evidence to suggest that the practical orientation of MMR is also a more accurate depiction of 'real' research practice. Bryman (2006) highlights the validity of this view. In his study of research practices of 30 social researchers for example, he found a far more fluid and flexible approach to research that was less paradigm driven and far more needs based. He argues that what occurs in the research process often differs widely from the intellectual conceptualisation of the research design and its development. In other words, what researchers teach or espouse is often different to what they do in designing their research (Bryman 2006).

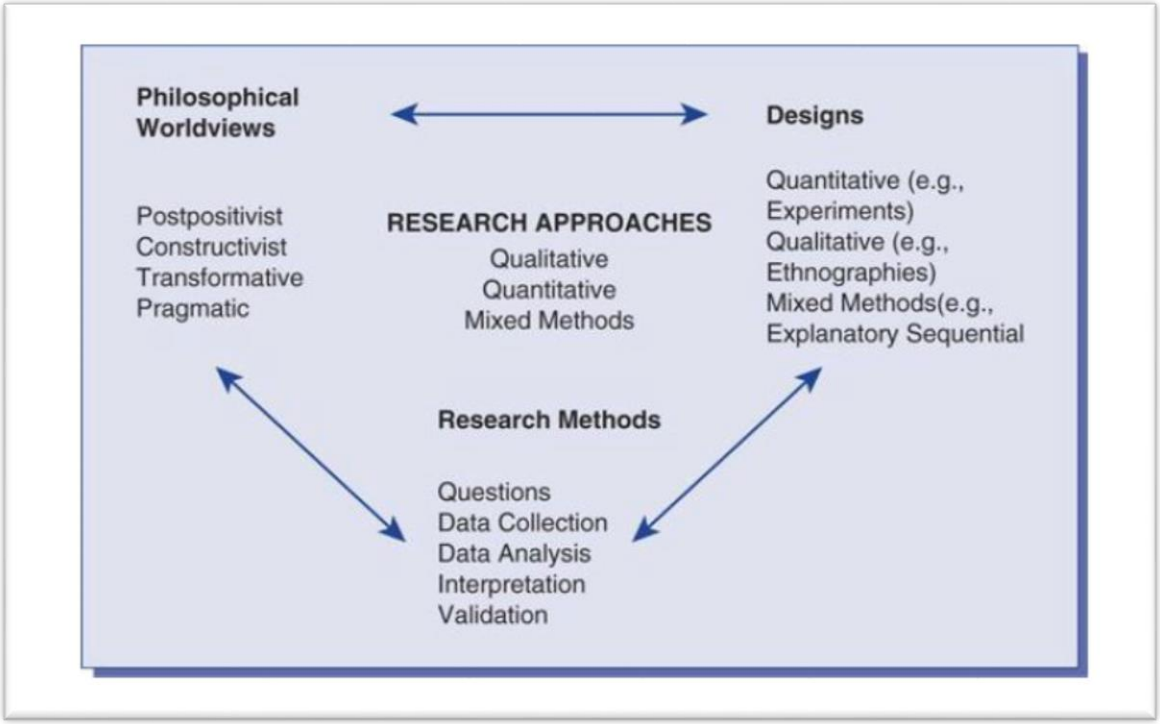
Crotty is another scholar that supports this claim. Although Crotty's research framework is often depicted and promoted in ways that imply a linear development to research design (as shown in Figure 8 above), Crotty has long contended that in practice, research designs arising from the philosophical position of the researcher and that progress through the sequential levels of design rarely occur in everyday research:

> 'Not too many of us embark on a piece of social research with epistemology as our starting point…we typically start with a real-life issue that needs to be addressed, a problem that needs to be solved, a question that needs to be answered. We plan our research in terms

of that issue or problem or question. What, we go on to ask, are the further issues, problems, or questions implicit in the one we start with? What, then, is the aim and what are the objectives of our research? What strategy seems likely to provide what we are looking for? What does that strategy direct us to do to achieve our aims and objectives? In this way, our research question, incorporating the purposes of our research, leads us to methodology and methods' (Crotty 1998, p. 13).

Other researchers such as Alston and Bowles (2005), Grix (2002), and Creswell and Clark (2007) also note a level of fluidity between the research design and the philosophical stand point. Like Crotty, they view the process of developing a research design as more dynamic and a design process that may be guided by, but is not tied to, the ontological or epistemological position of the researcher alone. Creswell and Clark (2007) depict the more realistic process below in Figure 9.

Figure 9: Research Design Process



Source: Creswell and Clark (2007, p. 36).

In line with these latter positions, the philosophical position of the researcher in this study was not an antecedent to the development of the research design and methodology. Instead this became part of an interdependent and mutually transformative process that at a practical level has informed and revealed the subsequent research design. In this case, the nature of the research questions in this study exposed the need for an MMR. This was checked against the ontological and epistemological stance of the researcher, and in a reflective process, the design of this mixed methods study was produced. Importantly, this also aligned with the epistemological position of the theorists and theory used in this study and in particular the dominant frameworks of Pierre Bourdieu. As noted on page 101, Bourdieu appears to share my own position on the nature of truth, viewing this as having both subjective and objective qualities. This aligns with the premise of MMR and the worldview of 'pragmatism' detailed below.

Whilst MMR can be question rather than theory driven, mixed methods researchers are still required to think deeply about their epistemological position. Adopting a MMR framework relies on more than just a design choice based on appeals to the research questions alone (Grix 2002; Shannon-Baker 2016).

The Pragmatic World View

Integrating the mixed methods position and the philosophical foundation of its development has drawn heavily on the work of Creswell (2009) in examining and identifying the researchers' worldview and applying this to the research study at hand. Creswell (2009) adopts Guba's definition of worldview as that encompassing the basic set of beliefs and ideas that guide actions and decision in research (Guba in Creswell 2009, p. 6). This includes one's epistemology (view of knowledge) and ontology (view of social reality).

Creswell outlines four main world views operating in the social research discipline that are most likely to influence researchers' methodological stance and subsequent methods for investigation. These include positivism, constructivism, advocacy and pragmatism (Creswell 2009) and are outlined below.

Table 2: The Four Main World Views for Social Research

Worldview	Philosophical Tenants	Characteristics and Association
Positivism	Knowledge is independent of the knower. There is an 'objective' truth to be captured.	Determinism Empirical observation Reductionism Theory verification Quantitative Methodology
Constructivism	There are no such things as truth or knowledge that is independent of the observation. All knowledge is derived from and through the viewer.	Understanding Multiple participant meanings Social and historical Construction (of meaning) Theory generation Qualitative Methodology
Advocacy/Participatory	Knowledge is grounded in and motivated by political actions. Meaning is found collaboratively with rather than from respondents.	Political Empowerment/issues Oriented Collaborative Change oriented Action research Emancipatory methodology
Pragmatism	No fixed sentiment on knowledge or truth. Knowledge is gathered via several sources from several perspectives to get a version of truth at point in time. There is both knowledge that is independent of the knower and knowledge that is created through the 'observer' observing.	Consequences for action Problem focussed Pluralistic regarding truth and meaning Real–world orientation Mixed methods methodology

Source: Adapted from Creswell (2009, pp. 6-9).

The present study is positioned within the practical, research question driven context of the pragmatic worldview.

Whilst MMR is a relative new-comer to the suite of social research methodologies, pragmatism has been present in the philosophical literature for centuries. Some theorists believe it has always been part of the philosophical debate dating back to the time of Plato and Socrates (Johnson, Onwuegbuzie & Turner 2007). It is generally accepted that in its current form, the pragmatic worldview[8] was most recently espoused and developed by American philosophers such as John Dewey, William James, and Charles Sanders in the 1800s (Creswell 2009). Historical origins aside, the pragmatic world view is a common philosophical foundation of contemporary MMR (Tashakkori & Teddlie 2010). Not surprisingly, it encompasses a level of methodological freedom not found in mixed methods research but as proponents of MMR often note, the methodology is not without ontological and epistemological regard.

One of the main assumptions of the pragmatic worldview is a belief in knowledge as dynamic and interdependent rather than dichotomous, and it is this that likely drives its common utilisation as a philosophical platform for using mixed methods in one study. As Table 2 showed, unlike positivist frameworks, pragmatism considers knowledge is both contextual and arising from the 'viewer', yet can simultaneously hold some absolute qualities that stand independent of the knower (Creswell 2009; Tashakkori & Creswell 2007). Under this rubric, there is an assumed independence of knowledge from the mind but not necessarily from meaning (Crotty 1998). It is here we see the obvious connections and compatibility with the present study and MMR more generally (Hesse-Biber 2010; Tashakkori & Creswell 2007; Teddlie & Yu 2007).

The pragmatic tradition is steeped in the assumption that there is no absolute truth and multiple truths can exist at any one time. Under this mantle, the researcher's task is to respond to the research aims and questions in a way that is unique and specific to the phenomena under review. When applied to the MMR study, there is not an absence of epistemology, but one that considers and holds multiple views, perspectives, and stand points. This contrasts with mono methods that

8 This study uses the term 'worldview'. It defines worldview as a set of beliefs and assumptions about knowledge and ways it is possible to 'know' it and summarises positions and terminology used in other texts. This definition is taken from position outlined in Creswell (2009, p.6).

rest with just one view of truth, knowledge, and the social world (Johnson, Onwuegbuzie & Turner 2007, p. 113).

Whilst pragmatism appears to be a good fit with the present research, its application to social research is not without contest (Tashakkori & Teddlie 2010). The issue of whether MMR is ontologically and epistemologically possible because of differences in the central tenants of quantitative and qualitative methodology has a notable presence still in the methodology literature. This debate is commonly referred to as the 'paradigm wars'. At its heart is a contest of ideas on the epistemological compatibility (or otherwise) of utilising quantitative and qualitative research methodologies within the same study (Bryman 2006) and is an issue that must be resolved by any mixed methods researcher.

Some researchers posit that MMR has a philosophical flaw in that quantitative and qualitative methods cannot be readily accommodated under the same philosophical model. Yet there is a group of MMR advocates that deny a compatibility issue in the first place. Those adopting this position reject an epistemological difference between quantitative and qualitative methods in the first place, claiming the differences between quantitative and qualitative methods are as large as the differences between methods within each methodology family and are thus arbitrary and unhelpful (Bergman 2008) or do not exist (Trochim 2006).

Other researchers have taken a different approach, noting the difference but contending that such differences are not absolute and are less important than adopting a 'what works best' rationale. Under this viewpoint, the ends essentially justify the means - dispensing with an epistemological context altogether. Here, paradigmatic simpatico is recognised as an ideal but it is explicitly traded off and deferred under the promise of greater strength in the final results because MMR capitalises on the assets of each method and the data derived from them (Bryman 2006).

Finally, others have taken a third approach recognising the philosophical differences in quantitative and qualitative methods, but subsuming them under the rubric of an epistemological position that excludes neither and encompasses both (Creswell et al. 2003; Tashakkori & Teddlie 2010). This

latter position is often called the alternate paradigmatic position and it is where the pragmatic worldview adopted by the present study is positioned (Tashakkori & Teddlie 2010).

In examining this debate amongst scholars, compelling arguments can be found for each of these positions and like all epistemological views in the context of the research, the final decision for implementation lays at the hands (and heart) of the researcher. As Grix (2002) has noted, it is essential that the researcher states their philosophical position and produces work that aligns with this stated position:

> ‘This will allow (them) to defend their own positions, understand other researchers’ positions and fully grasp the directional relationship of key components of the research process. The latter is essential if students wish to engage properly in academic debate and produce quality and transparent research projects’ (p. 184).

Considering the above, the writer asserts utilising a mixed methods design will enhance the academic rigor of the investigation and that it is both necessary and sufficient. The study requires MMR design because a quantitative methodology alone would be insufficient to elucidate the issues involved in the decision-making processes and arrangements for primary care of young children in the family.

The researcher’s worldview and research position is pragmatism. Pragmatism represents a good fit for the present research because this study called for the consideration of work and care decisions from multiple positions and perspectives. In part, the research questions could be resolved through counting and measuring what fathers reported they did regarding caregiving and for how long. But, the study aimed to understand why they did it, what they thought about in taking such actions and, most importantly, how these influenced what they did across the work and family contexts they encountered. This necessitated the address and measure of both objective and subjective phenomena and required a research paradigm that would support a heuristic synthesis of these. One without the other would not elucidate a full picture of the phenomena under review.

The above position no doubt has roots in the writer’s background in both social work and psychology. The former is predicated on a ‘person in context’ knowledge base that views

experiences and meaning as relational. This contrasts with the latter educational foundation that is grounded in facts, and what is often termed a 'scientific', positivist approach (Alston & Bowles 2005; Grix 2002). Both approaches sit comfortably as valid and useful worldviews in the mind of the writer. They are not mutually exclusive however, and each has excellent application in the present study due to the nature of the research questions. In this thesis, these have been united under a pragmatic world view because of the researcher's ontological position and belief that knowledge can be both objective and subjective, independent, and contextual depending on how you ask the question. As noted above, the application of the pragmatic worldview to the present study does more than simply justify the chosen MMR methodology. It is the writer's position on understanding that recommends it. The pragmatic worldview informs and supports, reflects, and justifies the MMR methodology application in this case. As previously noted, it also aligns with the theoretical understandings of the present research in that Bourdieu's Theory of Practice inculcates this same worldview that 'truth can be both objective and subjective, the result of both the actor and the circumstances and structure the actor find himself within' (Maton 2003). The lead role of the research questions in this study is therefore both affirmed and supported.

Research Questions: An Assessment

In MMR, the research questions provide the foundation for conducting the study, 'helping the researcher to organize the research and give it relevance, direction, and coherence (Onwuegbuzie & Leech 2006, p. 478). Considering this, the research questions of the present study have undergone considerable analysis.

In this study, the research questions have been used as both an anchor and a compass for the research design and its corollary methodology. This has privileged the research questions as the driver of research design, which is increasingly accepted and usual practice within applied research projects such as the present that demand a MMR strategy (Crotty 1998; Hesse-Biber 2010). For this reason, the research questions hold both practical and philosophical significance and require comprehensive review and analysis. This includes assessing if the research questions are appropriate for a MMR design and will likely yield a useful and reliable data set (Hesse-Biber 2010; Leedy & Ormond 2005).

Much like the role of the researcher's philosophical position in research design outlined above, there is considerable difference examined in the opinions of scholars and researchers in terms of what makes a 'good research question' in social research. Alston and Bowles (2005) for example stress the importance of the research question to clearly operationalise the concepts to be explored, or, in the case of quantitative methodologies to be measured in the study (p. 39). Grinnell and Unrau (2010) highlight the importance of the research question to reveal the level of design of the study. These researchers take the concept a step further by classifying different research question frames and levels of design along a continuum where the questions determine the level of design (Grinnell & Unrau 2010, p. 25). Whilst others such as Hesse-Biber (2010) focus on the need for research questions to align with the chosen methodology being used, either quantitative or qualitative in nature (Creswell & Clark 2007; Hesse-Biber 2010).

A line of continuity found amongst scholars on this issue however is an agreement that good research questions are those that are feasible, useful, purposeful, and ethical (Alston & Bowles 2005; Grinnell & Unrau 2010; Hesse-Biber 2010). An additional consideration, particularly regarding MMR research questions, is clarity, where the main factors and the rationale for adopting a mixed methods approach would ideally be explicit and self-evident in the question composition (Hesse-Biber 2010, p. 49). The present study's research questions effectively cover each of these criteria well. Using the criteria set out by Hesse-Biber (2010) the following attributes of the research questions in the present study are asserted.

Significance

As the literature review has shown, a gap exists in the knowledge base on work and care and its relationship with the gender contract at work and in the home (Hosking, Whitehouse & Baxter 2010; Martin et al. 2013; Whitehouse, Baird & Hosking 2006; Whitehouse, Hosking & Baird 2008). An under-researched area in development of work and care arrangements following the birth of a child, is the perspectives of fathers. Paternal perspectives on work and care have long been assumed if not measured by and through the self-reports from maternal samples (Hosking, Whitehouse & Baxter 2010; Martin et al. 2013; Whitehouse, Baird & Hosking 2006; Whitehouse, Hosking & Baird

2008). On this level, the present study provides a methodological enhancement to the current state of knowledge on fathers, work, and care by gathering a comprehensive range of information directly from fathers as the key informant group.

Current understandings on the influence and structure of decision making on the work and care amongst couples is largely derived from international samples and specifically from the Nordic nations. The knowledge base is highly steeped in a specific socio-political context that may not necessarily be applicable to the Australian context (Orloff 2008). The targeted sampling frame of the present study gathered a large sample of paternal respondents in Australia. This will yield critical and original results that are of value and significance to the present knowledge base. In both cases this outweighs any inconvenience or intrusion that may arise through participation. On these grounds, the research questions pass the cost benefits test (Alston & Bowles 2005).

Taken together, the present study questions provide a sound and significant contribution to the area of their inquiry. When answered, these questions will allow employers, governments, and other interested stakeholders to take a more informed ‘course of action’ in the design and delivery of work and family programs, enhancing the utility and significance of the research (Alston & Bowles 2005, p. 21).

Feasibility

Assessment of feasibility refers to both the asking and answering of the research (Grinnell & Unrau 2010). The research questions for any given study must be realistic, understandable, and ultimately answerable (Alston & Bowles 2005). In terms of the present study the research questions are both realistic and answerable. They cover existing phenomena that have been easily captured and researched in other domains and contexts (see for example Huerta et al. 2013; Lundquist, Misra & O'Meara 2012; Meil 2013; O'Brien 2013), and build from an existing knowledge that is transferable to the new context of asking. These factors provide a strong case for the feasibility of the present research questions.

Ethical

The research questions in the present study are both ethical and appropriate. Whilst the ethical strengths of the research itself is discussed in more detail from page 154, a review of the research questions under this criterion show the questions to be purposeful and relevant and therefore, using a cost benefits ratio, pose very little disturbance or potential for harm to participants (Grinnell & Unrau 2010). The research questions are neither distressing nor intrusive. The wording is also free from assumptions and bias. For example, by referring to partners and partnerships, rather than marriage and mothers, they do not assume sexual orientation or marital status. They only ask the information necessary for the stated purpose of the study and in ways that are clear and specific to the phenomena under investigation (Hesse-Biber 2010). Together the research questions satisfy the strictest assessment of informed consent, face validity, and protection of respondent and their identity, because they elicit targeted information directly relevant to the aims of the study in ways that maximise consent and anonymity and minimise disruption, intrusion, or any level of distress or upset beyond inconvenience (Alston & Bowles 2005; Grinnell & Unrau 2010).

Self-Evident Variables of Measure

The research questions clearly identify who should be asked the questions, what they should be asked, and the relationship with other variables of measure in the remaining question sets. The main research question for example is explicit in its focus on fathers and the targeting of their experiences and perspectives. It denotes the time-period under investigation (primary school years) and the core variables of measure (barriers and enablers to primary caregiving). These are expanded in the subsidiary questions (ideal policy features, actual arrangements, attitudes, and beliefs) as well as the context (the workplace, policy, and relationships). Finally, because the total question platform targets direct response variables (what are the barriers and enablers to shared care?), as well more subjective, experiential, and process-oriented variables (how do fathers explain differences for example) the need for quantitative and qualitative methodologies in the present study are made explicit which is critical to MMR questions (Hesse-Biber 2010, 2015).

Together the above analyses provide a sound rationalisation for the development of the study research questions and highlight the main components of their alignment with the proceeding research design elements. At a concrete level, the research questions in this study can be seen to shift from counting things and examining the relationship between quantitative variables to more subjective phenomena such as how the respondents themselves understand these relationships and explain their manifestation (experiences). In doing so the need for both a macro and micro, objective and subjective, review of the caregiving arrangements becomes apparent and is made explicit. This calls for the multi-method approach that was taken up by the study and underscores the selection of a broad and multi-faceted theoretical worldview of social reality that is expressed in the next sections.

Research Design and Purpose in MMR

Leech and Onwugebuzie (2009) suggest MMR is particularly complex and has an additional layer of decision making that begins with the researcher exploring the need and feasibility of a mixed methods design in the first place, and comparing what might be achieved using a mono method design. They have forwarded a five-step process to design when contemplating a MMR design. This framework was used to guide the present study. It encompasses five focal points of design including the purpose of using a mixed methods design, the theoretical framework used to support it, the time orientation (either concurrent or sequential), the weight or emphasis of each method (quantitative lead, qualitative lead, or balanced) and the stage or integration (either data collection, analysis, or reporting stages). The main criteria for each of these steps in outlined in Table 3.

Table 3: The Five-step Design Process for MMR

Criteria	Options	Study Choice
Purpose	Triangulation, complementarity, initiation, development, or expansion (Greene, Caracelli & Graham 1989)	Complementarity – additional data (interviews) deepens understanding of the research problem
Theoretical framework (worldview)	Positivism, constructionism, advocacy/action, or pragmatism	Pragmatism

Criteria	Options	Study Choice
	(Creswell 2009; Leech & Onwuegbuzie 2009)	
Time orientation	Concurrent versus sequential (Creswell 2009; Leech & Onwuegbuzie 2009)	Sequential (one after the other; survey then interview, and per organisation)
Emphasis	Qualitative, quantitative, or balanced (Leech & Onwuegbuzie 2009)	Quantitative QUANT → qual
Stage of Integration	Data collection, data analysis, interpretation stage (Creswell 2009)	Data analysis stage

Research Design Features

Design Rational

After establishing a sound research problem to explore and generating some reasonable questions to answer, a researcher must make a reasoned determination on how exactly they will set about finding helpful and coherent responses (Crotty 1998). The final research design is highly shaped by the aims of the study and the demand of the research questions. This is particularly important in MMR design because it is highly practical in orientation (Creswell 2009; Tashakkori & Teddlie 2010).

The reasons for adopting mixed methods designs in the first place are varied but early adopters did so almost exclusively for data triangulation (Greene, Caracelli & Graham 1989; Hesse-Biber 2010). Triangulation in this sense refers to the use of one data set to support, refute, confirm, deny, or validate another (Creswell 2009). This usually entails the use of both a qualitative and a quantitative method within the same study (Johnson, Onwuegbuzie & Turner 2007).[9]

9 The MMR is used here to describe methodology where one or more qualitative, and one or more quantitative methods, are used in the same study. Hesse-Biber (2009) contrasts this with multi-method designs which are those that use more than one method from the same domain (e.g. two qualitative methods or two quantitative methods).

MMR has now moved beyond rationales based solely on the need for triangulation and are utilised for a variety of other reasons (Greene, Caracelli & Graham 1989; Hesse-Biber 2010; Leech & Onwuegbuzie 2009). Regardless of the rationale behind undertaking an MMR study, most researchers (including the writer) agree that adding data or methods to an already suitable research design is not only unnecessary but potentially undermining to the integrity of the study. Mixed methods designs are specific. They are neither necessary nor sufficient to produce more 'valid' or trustworthy findings. As such mixed methods designs are necessarily grounded in and by the phenomena under investigation and are derived from the intended use of the findings (Greene, Caracelli & Graham 1989; Leech & Onwuegbuzie 2009). More is not more when it comes to MMR.

Greene, Caracelli and Graeme (1989) set out five main rationales for adopting a MMR design. These are noted overleaf in in Table 4. This framework includes triangulation, complementarity, initiation, development and expansion (Greene, Caracelli & Graham 1989).

The above rationales for a MMR design are not exhaustive. Some researchers emphasise the benefits of a mixed methods design to enhance sampling and recruitment for example where one method can identify a suitable sample for the other. Others focus their design logic toward the final outcomes (e.g. program evaluation) or result from more practical concerns such as a 'request' by funding bodies, clients, or similar (Johnson, Onwuegbuzie & Turner 2007, p. 116). What many, if not all, researchers have in common when they adopt an MMR design method is that each rationale is related specifically to the demands of the research questions.

Table 4: Table of Reasons for Adopting a MMR Design

Reason	Rationale
Triangulation Convergence, corroboration, correspondence, of results from the different methods – from one method with the results from the other method.	To increase the validity of constructs and inquiry results by counteracting or maximising the heterogeneity of irrelevant sources of variance attributable especially to inherent method bias but also to inquirer bias, bias of substantive theory, biases of inquiry context.
Complementarity Elaboration, enhancement, illustration, clarification of the results.	To increase the interpretability, meaningfulness, and validity of constructs and inquiry results by capitalising on inherent method strengths and counteracting inherent biases in methods and other sources.
Initiation Discovery of paradox and contradiction, new perspectives of frameworks, the recasting of questions or results from one method with questions or results from the other method.	To increase the validity of constructs and inquiry results by capitalising on inherent method strengths.
Development Results from one method to help develop or inform the other method, where development is broadly construed to include sampling and implementation, as well as measurement decisions.	To increase the breadth and depth of inquiry results and interpretations by analysing them from the different perspectives of different methods and paradigms.
Expansion Extend the breadth and range of inquiry by using different methods for different inquiry components.	To increase the scope of inquiry by selecting the methods most appropriate for multiple inquiry components

Source: Adapted from Greene, Caracelli and Graham (1989, p. 259).

In the present study, the adoption of the MMR design is best described as complementarity. In the present case, the addition of the interview data was planned to provide a full and complete response to the research questions which jointly included ‘what’ and ‘why’ components spanning both subjective and objective modes of measure. The interview data was set to complement the findings established by the survey, as the survey alone was not considered sufficient to respond to the research questions in their entirety.

Given the research questions have such a critical role to play in the design of MMR ensuring the research questions themselves are well considered and in line with the aims of the study is crucial. An assessment of the research questions as they have been implemented in this study is outlined below.

Time Orientation: Concurrent Versus Sequential

The study aims and questions in this research have also driven the type of MMR design to be applied. A sequential mixed methods approach was adopted in the present study. This generated both quantitative and qualitative data however it is a predominantly quantitative mix (Hesse-Biber 2015). Considering again the five main rationales for adopting a MMR design suggested in Table 4, the present study adopted a mixed method design for reasons of data complementarity (Greene, Caracelli & Graham 1989). The addition of the qualitative data gather to the survey method in this study was to enrich the understandings presented by the survey and explore those elements of the research questions that were left unanswered by the survey (Greene, Caracelli & Graham 1989).

Quantitative Versus Qualitative: Ratio and Sequence

The relative importance of the quantitative and qualitative data is both reflected in and driven by the research aims and questions and the proportional representation of subjective and objective inquiry (Hesse-Biber 2015). Researchers such as Leech and Onwuegbuzie (2009) argue that all research design falls along a continuum where researchers must decide the degree of mixing they will do and be clear about the reasons why:

> ‘Specifically, mono-methods, sit at one end of the continuum and involve the exclusive use of either quantitative or qualitative research techniques in a study. Once a study combines quantitative and qualitative techniques to any degree, the study no longer can be viewed as utilizing a mono-method design. At this level, the study either is using a fully mixed design or a partially mixed design’ (p. 267).

The various mix of design is unique to each research study and is driven yet again by the aims of research and its context. In this study, the quantitative data from the survey (analysed by counting and contrasting numbers) in this case has been complemented with insights gathered by the qualitative data from the interviews. The subjective explanations and narratives of the respondents in the interviews were used to accomplish the full range of the research aims. This design is commonly known and indexed in the literature as a QANT → qual mixed methods design (Leech & Onwuegbuzie 2009). The capital letters typify the dominance of the quantitative data, the direction of the arrow indicates the order in which the data gather occurred and the lower case of the second method indicating its complementary status.

The decision to use the qualitative as an adjunct is again research question driven. Applied to the study, examining the decisions of fathers with regards to primary caregiving in the preschool years was established via the survey in this study. The research questions also called for an understanding of these decisions and specifically the context – why and how these decisions came to be. These were outside the methodological range of a survey but related to decisions and contexts able to be baselined and established from the survey. For this reason, it was both logical and necessary for the interviews to be scheduled after and the data analysed in a sequential manner where they followed from the survey and enriched findings from the data dominant survey (Leech & Obwuegbuzie 2009).

Level of Design: Exploratory/Descriptive

The two most important factors in guiding the level of design is the extent of specific knowledge available on the chosen subject and the nature of the research question itself (Grinnell & Unrau 2010). Based on these two factors, this research is best described as exploratory.

Exploratory designs are best suited to those research questions where there are speculative and/or rudimentary levels of knowledge on the phenomena under investigation (Grinnell & Unrau 2010). This study is original and innovative in its scholarship because it uses a predominantly male sample to examine primary care decisions, policies, and related work and care issues. As the literature review has noted fathers have been under researched when it comes to primary caregiving and the

decisions that influence who stays at home, who goes to work and for how long (Huerta et al. 2013). Further, it has often been assumed that fathers are reasonably happy with the current distribution of primary caregiving for children. Yet there is very little evidence to suggest that is the case and only a cursory understanding of the issues and influences such as PPL in the Australian context (Hosking, Whitehouse & Baxter 2010; Russell & O'Leary 2012). As previously noted, much of the knowledge in this domain stems from international investigations and is highly concentrated in the Nordic nations. These nations operate within a substantially different political economy to Australia. Thus, any understandings based on international samples are at best speculative in application to Australia (Orloff 2008).

The level of design also has some descriptive elements however, a fully descriptive design has been restricted to mainly being the sampling frame in the present study. The convenience sampling characteristics of the data collection has hindered the development of a fully descriptive level of design that might have otherwise been generalisable across the strata of working fathers in Australia. Like the present study, a descriptive level of design is generally related to ‘what’ questions but it does require a non-probability sample for valid generalisability beyond the sample alone. The sampling frame or pool of potential respondents to the study was far from this and represents a rather homogenous group. The study only targeted those employers from the ‘male champions of change’ group, and as a result has restricted claims arising from the study to have a strong descriptive or explanatory capacity (Alston & Bowles 2005, p. 35).

Procedure

The data collection process and requirements are outlined below. A flow chart indicating how the sample progressed from recruitment to response is found in Appendix 1. These highlights three main steps in the recruitment phase of the study.

Step 1: Employed fathers were invited to participate in the survey via email from their employer or via an advertisement on the intranet.[10]

Step 2: If the respondent met the study criteria and opted in to the survey, the end page of the survey invited respondents to self-nominate for a follow-up interview along with their partner. Each partner was invited into the study via the father, however, partners needed to opt in to the study by connecting with the researcher independently.

Step 3: Once voluntary participation was agreed, partners[11] completed a partner survey to allow for cross-referencing across the couples at interview and capture a small, comparator sample of partners. This came to be known as the 'mothers' sample' and is referred to in more detail in Chapter 6.

Employers

The employers that participated in this study were predominantly from the federal public service. One private employer was recruited into to the study. Table 5 below highlights the nature of the agencies/ employers involved. Details on the agency type and number is provided overleaf. Only broad details are provided to ensure the anonymity of the participant employers as agreed in the ethics application and subsequent arrangements with employers.

Table 5: Sample Employers

Name	Respondent	% of Sample	Core Business	Employer Type	Employer Size
Darwin	2	0.2%	Specialist/shared service	Public	**< 1000**
Roosevelt	12	1.3%	Regulatory/governance	Public	**<1000**
Lucas	75	7.9%	Regulatory/policy	Public	**<1000**
More	174	18.3%	Regulatory/operational	Public	**>1000**

10 Only one agency in the participating employer group opted to use the intranet as their HRIS systems were unable to accurately identify employees by gender

11 As all partners who participated in research were female they are referred to as mothers in the context of the interviews.

Lincoln	198	20.8%	Professional services/consulting	Private	**>1000**
Henson	490	51.5%	Operational/regulatory	Public	**>1000**
TOTAL	**951**	**100%**			

Participating employers distributed the link to the online survey between July and December 2013. Due to the limited Human Resources Information Services (HRIS) available in the participating employers, the introduction and link to the survey were sent to all male employees, rather than 'fathers' as there was often no way of segregating fathers of preschool age children in these organisations and creating a more defined sampling frame. In each case a letter of introduction and invitation to participate in the survey was sent by a senior figure head in the organisation or a known diversity and inclusion champion. The criteria provided for participating in the survey is replicated below:

- ✓ Parenting a preschool child (under six years of age).
- ✓ Be the primary earner in their family (that is, earns more money per year then than their partner from direct employment).
- ✓ Be part of an intact family (living together in the same household – married or de-facto).

Fathers who did not meet the criteria were unable to gain entry to the survey body. They were however, directed to a page that offered the opportunity to obtain a copy of results and indicate interest in participating in future research. Those who met the criteria and completed the survey were also invited to take part in the interview process.

Interviews were conducted between September 2013 and May 2014. The couples self-selected into the interview sample. All survey participants who meet the criteria were eligible to participate, providing their partner agreed to participate.

The lack of screening procedures in the interview phase is warranted in this case because expected interest/response rates (particularly for couple interviews) were relatively low and perhaps more so in the case of time-pressed parents. Therefore, the researcher did not anticipate having to cull or

vet interviewees. As this sub-sample was derived from the survey sample they had already been pre-screened and eligible.

The Survey

The survey used in this study can found in Appendix 2. A survey was chosen as the primary data collection tool in this study for several reasons.

Firstly, the quantitative aspects of the study call for a broad and relatively large sample understanding of fathers' caregiving attitudes, actions, and policy access. Survey and online survey in particular still provide one of the most effective and efficient ways to gather a substantial quantity of data from a large population (Alston & Bowles 2005). Secondly, a survey provides a level of anonymity that is not afforded by other methods such as interviews, focus groups, or public forums (Alston & Bowles 2005). A primary focus of the present study is to understand the phenomena in the context of work and the home. Survey methods allow respondents to provide frank feedback and ideas due to the anonymity and the removal of any threat (real or imagined) of reprisals. These features are particularly powerful in research in employment contexts and similar intimate or interdependent relationship of meaning including marriage and cohabitation with partners where an ongoing and dependent connection post-survey and reporting back of results is involved. Both were applicable in this study. By using a survey, it allowed the respondents to remain anonymous and helped to overcome barriers to speaking out and reporting their experiences as well as the frustrations and the inadequacies of current conditions without fear of implications or reprisal.

The data was collected via an anonymous online survey housed on surveymonkey.com. The survey was developed specifically for the present study and covered the gaps in knowledge that emerged from the literature review. This includes questions that attend to fathers' attitudes to primary care rather than caregiving in general, fathers' actual leave taking in terms of primary care and these care arrangements over time, the drivers of care arrangements across the couple, fathers' ideal care and leave arrangements (including policy needs), and finally what fathers understand to have driven the final care arrangements amongst known variables of influences such as policy, partners, and the workplace. These core variables of measure all appear to play a role in undertaking a

primary care role but the direct connection between policy, partners, and primary care giving has been hard to establish in Australia due to a paucity of research and, methodologically, a lack of boundary between primary care and other caregiving, as well as policy terms and definitions. The survey sought to address these issues, create some baseline data, and understanding at the exploratory level.

The survey instrument was piloted several times prior to launch. The first utilised a small sample of colleagues within the university (n=10). The second, a wider network of diversity and HR colleagues and where appropriate their partners (n=15), and another test within a sub-sample of fathers from a non-participating employer network (n=8). On each occasion feedback was positive and end users indicated sound face validity and supports the notion of this survey to measuring what it is intended to measure (Bryman, 2012). Given the non-probability sample and exploratory nature of the present study, further testing of the survey was not considered.

Survey Definitions

Key definitions used in this survey including the definition of ‘primary care’ and ‘parental leave' are presented below.

Caregiving

In this survey, ‘primary caregiver’ was defined in the survey as the person who: ‘more often than not is responsible for the physical care needs of the child during the working week.’

This definition is like that used by the FWO and the ABS.

Leave type

Policy names are not universal and vary from enterprise to enterprise. For reporting on the various leave policies, these are differentiated by context of the leave as follows:

Maternity leave

‘This is leave specifically designated for the mother. The basis of eligibility is gender. This leave is usually taken prior to and immediately following birth. It has a maternal child health focus on bonding and physical recovery.’

Primary caregiver leave

‘This is longer-term leave for care. It is often termed parental leave. The leave taker must be solely responsible for the care of the child during the normal working week. This is often called maternity leave when taken by women or parental leave otherwise.’

Concurrent leave

‘A shorter duration leave taken at the same time as the primary caregiver at and/or after birth (usually called paternity leave or partner leave). The focus is on bonding and assisting the birth partner in the immediate post-birth period.’

The various leave types were clearly defined and differentiated in the survey to minimise conflation of leave types and variation across agencies and employers.

Data Analysis: Survey

In line with the exploratory nature of the study, the survey findings were analysed and presented using summary statistics, frequency distributions, and cross tabulations. Some inferential techniques were employed for particular data sets. Significance testing utilised the standard $p < 0.05$ measure unless otherwise indicated. Each relevant analysis is outlined in the results section of this thesis and used traditional statistical techniques such as chi-square, analysis of variation (ANOVA), correlation, and simple regression.

Sample sizes for analysis varied across each question. Not all respondents were required to answer all questions in the survey, and as noted in Appendix 2, the survey included skip logic applications so that respondents only answered the questions relevant to them. For example, not all respondents had children older than 12 months and auto skipped through to the next section in line recommendations for user-friendly survey design (Presser et al. 2004). In addition, not all questions

were compulsory and some respondents chose not to respond to certain questions. The reasoned use of forced response techniques enhanced the ethical framework of the survey by providing free choice to respondents wherever possible and balanced this with gathering a valid response set from an adequate sample size (Dillman et al. 2003).

Data analysis was carried out using SPSS software. Prior to analysis, the data was cleaned, where missing, incomplete, or trivial responses were removed from the data set. The main changes to the original sample were as follows.

Respondents that did not respond to the compulsory demographic questions or the first section (0-6 months of age) questions were removed as they were considered as incomplete/invalid cases. These questions were critical to meaningful analysis as they formed the basis of the multi-variate and cross group analyses. As such these cases (n=41) were considered as invalid cases and were removed from the sample.

The second set of case removal involved responses to a sampling integrity question placed in the later stages of the survey. This was a deliberate inclusion in the survey and critical to ensure an appropriate sample has been collected for analyses when the sample were self-selecting into the study.

In terms of the sample frame, participation in the survey was predicated on the paternal respondents being the primary earner of the family. This was defined as being 'the partner in this relationship that earns the most money'. The sample integrity question asked the respondent to describe their partner's earning status compared to them. Respondents who indicated their partner was a 'primary' or 'equal' earner were removed from the sample. This resulted in a loss of 130 respondents from the original data set.[12] The literature has indicated that fathers, whose partners earn the same or more money, may have an easier time arranging or justifying time away from work to care. Previous research has shown that care decisions are highly rationalised by fathers on economic grounds because stability for the family finances is a known driver of care decision

12 These cases were kept for future analyses outside this thesis sample.

making. The aim of this study was to see what fathers decided to do in the context of the family, which is now the one-and-a half breadwinner family model where the father is the primary earner (Baxter 2000, 2013b, 2013c). Considering the above, the researcher had to weigh any benefits of the additional sample size against the integrity of the sample and its corollary impact on reliability and generalisability. In this case, testing the power of the new sample size indicated the loss in terms of explanatory power was negligible compared to the clarity and authenticity the researcher aspired to have in the results and findings through a 'clean' sample.

Despite the significant loss of cases from the original sample, the remaining sample is a precise and authentic representation of the intended sampling frame.

Interviews

A sample of the questions explored in each interview is provided in Appendix 3.

The interviews were held either in face to face, over the phone or via Skype. The interview medium was based on the preference of the respondent couple. Interviews were conducted at a time and place convenient to the respondents, often on weekends or after 8pm weeknights (when their children were in bed).

Each interview was recorded. Twelve of the 14 were interviewed together with the other couples interviewed consecutively on the same day and from the same location. In the two interviews where the partners were interviewed separately, this was for logistical rather than privacy reasons.

The preference for interviewing couples together (rather than separately) was a significant part of the researcher's own reflective practice. The researcher was mainly interested in understanding the negotiation of the care arrangements amongst couples – essentially how they got to where they did from where they wanted to be. By having each member of the couple there, the negotiation process could be recalled collectively, discussed, and corroborated simultaneously at interview strengthening the truthfulness of the recall and qualitative data itself (Bryman 2006). The researcher also felt that the exchange between the couple on this element and others might yield some

important observations on issues of power, exchange, and the other critical intra-couple dynamics that may influence decision making in the couple context (Bjornholt & Farstad 2012).

As outlined in the ethical discussion (below), each couple needed to provide their informed consent individually to be interviewed. This was to ensure there was no coercion involved in consenting to participate for each member of the couple. Giving consent to share their individual survey responses within the interview was part of the participation process. At the beginning of each interview consent to record and consent to share their survey responses within the interview was sought again prior to commencing the interview.

Data Analysis: Interviews

The data recordings were transcribed by a third-party service. The transcripts were then entered into NVIVO software. The interviews used a semi-structured format. The interview schedule was developed after the first round of survey data was deployed and initial analysis occurred. Each interview was then tailored to the couple taking their responses into consideration and using that as a starting point for each discussion.

Priori codes were used to examine and analyse the data from the interviews using thematic analysis techniques (Grinnell & Unrau 2005).[13] The data was firstly coded into two meaning units and themes derived from that platform. The two priori codes used were the main issues and questions not fully resolved or explained by the survey. These were selected because they were critical to the research question and aims of the study but left unanswered fully by the survey. The use of priori codes for analysis means the qualitative information was deduced rather than induced from the data. This is counter to typical uses of thematic analysis and qualitative data analysis methods which tends to be highly inductive. This however is within the scope of a pragmatic world view where the aims of the research and its research questions drive the use of the various data gather methods and data analysis.

13 Whilst priori codes were used in the analysis of the interview data for the thesis, those codes were not used exclusively to interview participants so that additional data might be gathered, analysed, and assessed at another time outside the present study.

The two issues from the survey explored in the interview data were:

- Negotiating and prioritising gendered influences on primary care arrangements.
- The role of the workplace on fathers' care contributions (beyond PPL).

These were essentially the priori codes for the analysis.

Negotiating and Prioritising Influences on Primary Care Arrangements

Whilst the survey data painted a clear picture of the arrangements parents made for primary care of their preschool children, it did not reveal the actual process of making those arrangements and the various negotiations and trade-offs that may have occurred in the making of those plans. In addition, financial viability emerged as the main driver of primary care decisions for fathers yet this was only one of a number of factors that needed to be prioritised by respondents. Fathers' perceived their partner to have been most influenced by their 'own preferences' for care of the child and importantly, this was considered to be a higher priority than that financial viability. This suggests fathers see a difference in decision-making rationale and influences when fashioning primary care arrangements.

Understanding these anomalies is directly relevant to policy development for mothers and fathers.

The Influence of the Workplace on Fathers' Care Contributions

In the survey, respondents were asked to select the factors that influenced their primary care decisions at three stages of the preschool years (birth to 6 months, 6-12 months and over 12 months of age). Three of the 12 factors provided in the response set were employment and workplace related – career aspirations, availability of leave, and business needs. None of these were in the top three drivers for either partner in the survey at any period of measure. This suggests other factors played a greater role in the decision-making process for primary care. This contrasted with the free text comments of the survey that were replete with reference to the workplace and employers as both a barrier and enabler of paternal care.

The numerous times fathers mentioned the workplace in the comments section of the survey strongly propose fathers do feel that the workplace impacts on work and care decision making however the survey was not suitably calibrated to tap into this perspective and/or was labelled and measured in a way that did not resonate or reflect their understandings and experiences. Thus, workplace factors require further examination in the context of influences on primary care for pre-schoolers.

Research Design Critique

Deductive vs Inductive Reasoning

The abovementioned design pillars have resulted in the QANT → qual design of the current study. This design is primarily deductive and some researchers would argue more positivist in nature. On a face-value analysis, this perspective is not entirely unfounded. The design of the present study does foreground the survey data with an emphasis on counting things. It further has several deductive inquiry features. This includes the use of the survey to capture outcomes and learning found in previous literature. Thus, the researcher would only come to know about the things covered in the data collection (top-down data collection) rather than the things that the respondents may have perhaps experienced or wanted to include and/or contribute (bottom-up data collection). Secondly, the interview data was confined to the data relating to the two pre-selected codes of workplace and partner influences. Rather than allow the meaning units to emerge organically from the data, specific and preordained observations were extracted from the interview narratives. Together these represent deductive inputs and outputs which are more strongly associated with quantitative methodology.

There are however other elements of the data collection analysis that are more inductive in nature and give the present methodology its true MMR status. The analysis of the interview data also relied on inductive reasoning albeit only on the pre-ordained priori codes (Bryman 2006). It is important to note that emergent codes were not precluded from the data. They were used to uncover themes under these initial codes and this practice mirrors that of inductive research analysis. As the results demonstrate there were several units of meaning that manifested in the

final analysis and inquiry even though they were initially generated from meaning engendered by the researcher.

Whilst overall this is a primarily deductive approach to qualitative data analysis it is not necessarily uncommon in MMR. It is a known research technique that in this case is transparent and therefore replicable. This meets the key criteria for sound methodology (Grix 2002) and a sound fit for purpose in the present study given the rationale logic of the interview as a supplement to the survey.

Sampling and Recruitment

The study findings emerge from the 951 survey responses from working fathers and semi-structured interviews with 14 couples. Survey data was drawn from an online survey distributed via large scale employers across Australia.

Participating employers were recruited using the researchers' employer networks. This led to connecting with the (then) federal sex discrimination commissioner, who provided contacts into the male champions of change network. Interested employers contacted the researcher directly and it was from this group of potential employers the final sample was drawn. All organisations that volunteered to participate in the study were accepted. This is in line with the 'opt in' nature of the recruitment plan. All employers invited into the study were likely to have employees that met the sampling frame being from large employers and/ or from the public service sector.

Sampling Frame

The study draws on survey data from 951 fathers and semi-structured interviews with 14 couples parenting at least one preschool child in the home. The sample comprised of white-collar professionals working in the public sector, with 20% employed in private enterprise. All fathers in the study were the primary earners in their household at the time of survey.

As noted above, the sampling strategy developed from the researcher's informal network.

Sampling is a critical part of research success. Alston and Bowles (2005) argue that the key element to this end is choosing a sample that accurately aligns with and reflects the situation under

review and the researcher must make firm and rational choices on ‘who to ask’ with this goal in mind. Whilst the overall sampling strategy is based on what we would commonly consider a convenience sample (being derived from the researcher’s own networks and entry and participation on a first-come-first-serve basis with little screening), the original frame in terms of targeting the male champions of change employers was a purposeful strategy that sought to gather data on a series of extreme cases.

Purposeful sampling is best described as a non-probability sample that is designed to meet a specific purpose (Alston & Bowles 2005). The current sample has elements of this sampling because it was a targeted group. The researcher targeted large employers (with over 1000 employees) with some interest or track record in gender equality strategy. The researcher considered that such employers would be more likely to support and promote a study of this nature because of their employee equality goals, but also due to the opportunity to gain some sound data on the needs of working parents in Australia with which to set future strategies and measure their policy performance.

The sample also has elements of homogenous case sampling. This means a specific group from the population is selected for investigation because their unique quality contributes a depth of understanding to the findings (Trochim 2006). In terms of the present study the participating organisations could be considered ‘extreme’ in the sense of being some of Australia’s largest and most progressive employers, so respondents were more likely to have access to ‘gold standard’ work and family policy. Public employers, banks, and profitable, professional services firms are often considered ‘pace setters’ in terms of employee policy provisions either through their statutory obligations, historical industrial arrangements, or their reliance on competitive attraction and retention levers (as is the case in the private sector employers). These employers were also more likely to have mature gender equality and family-friendly policies already in place. On this basis, the final sample would provide a ‘best case’ scenario for measure. Respondents would have access to formal employer supports for primary caregiving and a more enabling environment compatible with an earner/carer status compared to smaller, less mature organisations. The logic driving this sampling frame was that if support for care is not forthcoming in these employer contexts,

experiences are likely to be even less favourable for those fathers in more limited working environments such as the blue-collar sector and small business for example. As such, the current sample provides an excellent baseline of experiences to consider in line with the aims of the study.

Sample Demographics

The survey sample comprised working fathers who at the time of survey were the primary earners in their family. The majority of respondents were working full time in professional or managerial positions. Most worked for public employers, with just over 20% working for the Australian arm of an international professional services firm.

The average respondent was 35–40 and married to a female partner. They held a Bachelor degree (or higher) and earned a pre-tax salary over $75,000 per annum. Fathers worked an average of 42 hours a week. This was undertaken during core business hours, Monday to Friday. In terms of family composition, 49% of respondents reported having at least one child living at home who was two or under. Only 4% of the sample indicated they worked part time and these fathers were mainly from the public employers. Less than 1% of the sample identified as Indigenous or indicated they were part of a same-sex couple. The tables below show the overall compositions of the final survey sample. Table 6 shows the number of respondents by organisation type. This shows the majority of the sample worked for public employers with just under 21% from private enterprise.

Table 7 highlights the distribution of respondents across all organisations including the source of respondents for the interview phase of the study.

Table 6: Organisation Type

Organisation Type					
		Frequency	%	Valid %	Cumulative %
	Private	198	20.8%	20.8%	20.8%
	Public	753	79.2%	79.2%	100.0%
	Total	**951**	**100.0%**	**100.0%**	

Table 7: Respondent Numbers by Employer[14]

Name	Respondent	% of Sample	Core Business	Employer Type	No. of Interviewees
Darwin	2	0.2%	Specialist	Public	**1**
Roosevelt	12	1.3%	Regulatory	Public	**0**
Lucas	75	7.9%	Regulatory/policy	Public	**2**
More	174	18.3%	Regulatory/operational	Public	**3**
Lincoln	198	20.8%	Professional services	Private	**5**
Henson	490	51.5%	Operational/regulatory	Public	**3**
TOTAL	**951**	**100%**			**14**

Work Context

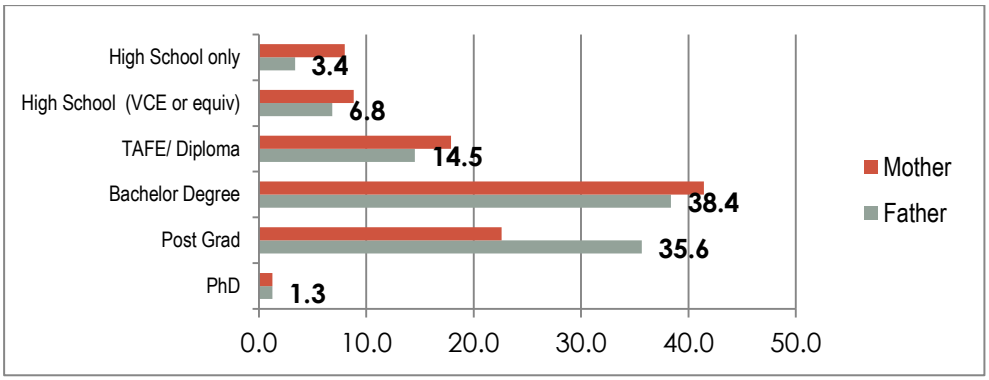
Most of the sample worked full time, in permanent positions, with less than 4% indicating they worked part-time hours at the time of survey. Part-time fathers were mainly from the public employers. The sample tended to work standard hours (Monday to Friday) with an average of 41.80 work hours per week and a range of 25–80 hours. Average salary was over $75,000 with most reporting a Masters- or Bachelor-level education.

14 All names of employers have been changed.

Partners and Children

The majority of partners were of childbearing age with a modal age of 35-40 and either married or in de facto relationships. The modal age of respondents' children was 3–4 years of age. Partners had slightly less formal education than fathers. More partners have Bachelor degrees compared to respondents, however, more fathers report they have more post-graduate qualifications compared to their partners. The cluster bar chart below shows the sample's education levels.

Figure 10: Percent of Fathers and Partners by Qualification (n=951)



All fathers in this sample were primary earners in their households though most had a partner in some form of paid work at the time of survey. Partners worked on average 23.82 hours per week at the time of survey. When the partner was noted as 'not working' (n=356) the majority of fathers cited 'caring for children' as the primary reason (n=311, 87%), supporting the strong links between maternal employment and patterns of work and age found elsewhere.

Sample Analysis

The survey sample offered a rich cross section of professional, white collar, primary earner fathers in Australia. There are however some limitations to note in the sample.

This respondent group appears to be more educated than average Australian men. This sample had 10% more Bachelor-educated men than national averages for the same age group of the

sample (Baxter 2002). This limits the generalisability of the findings. Conclusions are more likely to be representative of professional, white collar employees in similar employment situations.

Beyond this there are several strengths to this type of sample in terms of contextualising workplace impacts. As previously noted, the sample were more likely to have access to high calibre policy provisions for managing work and family. These are also the employment sectors that are most likely to have the mature and far-reaching gender equity and family-friendly policies already in place.

Taken together, the present sample is likely to provide a ‘best case’ scenario for primary earning fathers in terms of formal supports for both primary and secondary care responsibilities. If support is not forthcoming in these environments and contexts the experiences are likely to be even less favourable elsewhere (e.g. industrial and manufacturing, mining, or NFPs or NGOs) that have more physical, masculine, less educated, or rudimentary environments. This makes the present sample a sound ‘fit for purpose’ as an exploratory study and understanding what works best.

In terms of the organisations involved in the study, the various agencies from the public service that took part in this research represent a reasonable spread of specialist, operational, and regulatory agencies by category but not by number. There is not enough of the various agency types to consider this a typical public employer sample and all were from federal agencies. The same can be said for the one private enterprise group. The study however was not intended to be an analysis of various employer types or the particular enterprise. These however would be worthy sampling pursuits in future research to determine the degree to which findings cross different employment sectors and employer types. For now, primary earner fathers, in professional, white collar work within policy-rich environments are the extent of application for the findings.

The interview sample was far more homogeneous however. Each couple self-selected into the interview phase of the study and thus in and of themselves probably represent a group of the more motivated and engaged employees that sit at either end of target spectrum – those that shared and wish to offer their input on how they did it or those that did not share but really wanted to.

Regarding the demographics of the interview sample they as a group reflect the findings of the sample analysis for the survey, with a few exceptions.

The demographics of the interview sample are presented in Appendix 5. The majority of the interview sample were situated in what is best described as 'traditional' family arrangements where the father worked full time and the mother part time or not at all (n=11). At the time of interview, only four partners were not working. Seven partners worked part time and three were working full time. None of the fathers were on paid parental leave at the time of interview. In three couples, the father and mother both worked full time. In another, the father worked part time (four days per week) and the mother worked full time but with the father still earning more than the mother. Only eight fathers reported having access to paid leave for primary care from their employers.

Research Ethics

Good research is ethical research. The present study is a sound example of ethical inquiry. This study was approved by the Monash University Human Research Ethics Committee. Ethics Approval is presented in Appendix 7.

To ensure the research complied with the highest ethical standards, the Australian Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics (AASW) in addition to the National Statement on Ethical Conduct (NSEC) 2007 were consulted to assist in the research design process (Australian Association of Social Workers [AASW] 2010; National Health and Medical Research Council [NHMRC] 2007). Special emphasis was placed on principles of informed consent, anonymity, right to withdraw from the study, and beneficence. This was because the research involved inquiry through employers who would receive summary findings from the study, making it imperative employee respondents could not be identified and their information and observations treated with the upmost respect.

Informed consent

The AASW states that social workers and their research must ensure that consent to participate is given ‘voluntarily, without coercion or inferred disadvantage for refusal to cooperate’ and aligns with the requirements outlined in the NSEC. These conditions are well met in the present study.

The online survey was provided through surveymonkey.com. Participants were offered the opportunity to participate via their employer. Employers drafted a suitable invitation with summary information about the study and a live survey link. Interested employees clicked through to the survey site where the full explanatory statement could be found. If the employee wished to participate they had to pass through another gateway. These required participants to:

- ✓ Confirm they had read and understood the provided information/explanatory statement.
- ✓ Agree with the participation terms and conditions that clearly stated how they could withdraw, when they could withdraw, and where their information would be kept.
- ✓ Indicate their informed consent by agreeing they had read the terms and conditions before entering the survey.

Those who did not confirm they had read and understood the explanatory information cycled back to welcome/start page where explanatory information was held, or they had the option of exiting the survey and choosing not to participate. See survey in Appendix 2

The above process ensured participation occurred on an 'opt in' basis and a full and frank disclosure of the terms and conditions. This empowered the potential respondents to make a fully informed choice to participate. Potential respondents were able to consider participation with a maximum level of comfort and knowledge about how their data would be used and the degree of anonymity, and the potential risk of harm they may be exposed to both during and after their responses were collected (in the post-analysis reporting procedures and arrangements). This amounts to the full and frank disclosure to would-be participants required by both the AASW (2010) and the NHMRC (2007).

Anonymity

A critical aspect of ethical research is the protection of participant's identity. This relies on both anonymity and confidentiality.

According to the AASW, confidentiality is,

> ‘Respecting private and personal information, unless there are overriding ethical reasons for not doing’ (Clifford & Burke 2009, p. 68 in AASW 2010, p. 42).

In research ethics anonymity is considered an important aspect of providing confidentiality and managing risk to participants. In the NHMRC guidelines this is part of research ‘beneficence’ and should be considered as researchers weigh the costs and benefits of their decisions and actions in the inquiry process (NHMRC 2007, p. 26). Both the AASW and the NHMRC guidelines note that researchers must assess and mitigate as far as practical the risks of participation for respondents. They require researchers to ensure any potential benefits of the inquiry are easily ‘justified’ by the level of risk to which they may be exposed (NHMRC 2007, p. 14).

Anonymity and confidentiality are the biggest risk factors for participants in this project because the participation was connected to their employment context and their partnership (and if they chose to participate in the interviews). These are significant anchors in the lives of respondents and it was not a fact taken lightly by the researcher. In developing the process and procedures for this study, the researcher was cognisant that employers would receive reports of the findings and that the same employers were the conduit to respondent participation. As such, protecting the identity of the respondents was paramount. This was critical not only from an ethical perspective, but also to ensure respondents felt able to provide frank responses without fear of reprisal and to ensure results reflected participants’ thoughts and experiences.

It must also be noted it was not just respondents that were undertaking some level of risk in this study, but also employers. During this study, the researcher and supervisors would become privy to a significant level of knowledge on the internal mechanisms of each enterprise. This would include fairness and equity markers, policy applications and personal reflections from their employees about them as an employer. This has strong connections with brand and reputation, perhaps especially for the public-sector organisations/government agencies.

To mitigate risks to both participating employees and employers, no personally identifying information was requested by the survey itself from respondents. Given that invitations to participate in the study were third party initiated (by employers), at no time did the researcher have

names and contact details of potential or actual respondents. The exception to this is for those who identified themselves to the researcher as interested in participating in the interview component or provided their contact details in order to request the summary results of the study. In the latter scenario above, interested parties contacted the researcher directly via email (outside the survey). A results summary sheet was forwarded to those individuals once the study was concluded and the record destroyed.

In addition to the above the following was also undertaken to ensure the anonymity of all participants to the study:

- Those who wished to participate in the interview segment had to provide their contact details to do so. These were removed from the survey tool during analysis. These were then stored in a password-protected database on the researcher's computer.
- All IP capture technology was disengaged from the survey tool so respondents were not able to be traced even by the survey provider.
- The fathers' partners who agreed to participate in the interview process had to contact the researcher independently. Their details and survey responses were stored separate from their partner's and again under password-locked conditions.
- In reporting back to stakeholders, in this thesis, and subsequent supplications, all participants' data and quotes were re-identified so the identity of participants (both individual and organisational) remained anonymous. In a few cases alterations or omissions occurred within the direct quotes. These are marked with the asterisk symbol (*). In these cases, no meaning had been altered and was solely to protect the identity of the respondents. For example, one participant identified their employer by name in their quote and this name was removed.

Taken together, these steps ensured that there was a negligible risk of being identified through participation in this study and increased the beneficence of the study (NHMRC, 2007).

The NHMRC calls for all researchers to ensure that the beneficence of the research is at the forefront of research design and should maximise the gains from the inquiry whilst minimising any

potential risk. To achieve this, the researcher must anticipate what constitutes informed consent, risk, benefits, and anonymity from the respondents or participants perspective (NHMRC, 2007, p. 26).

In all cases this has been the case in the present study and the key attributes of the inquiry process has upheld and in turn been enhanced by a strong adherence to the research ethics espoused by the AASW (2010) and the NHMRC (2007).

Chapter Summary

This chapter has outlined the methodology of the research. It highlights the use of the research questions as the driver of the research design. The research questions in this study spanned both quantitative and qualitative domains, seeking to count and quantify the experiences of fathers, as well as capture their subjective understandings of these experiences in their context. The dual nature of the research questions recommended and informed the subsequent MMR design, breaking from the traditional linear progression of a mono methods study, with the ontological and epistemological position of the researcher underpinning the final related design. In its place, this thesis is imbedded in the pragmatic worldview that accommodates the use of both quantitative and qualitative methods because it does not view knowledge, and ways of knowing, as mutually exclusive. It is instead, considered multi-faceted. This worldview supports the exploratory, sequential design of the study where the qualitative data was drawn on to complement and enrich the main findings manifested by the survey. The large sample, and purposeful sampling frame of working fathers within large scale employers, meant some poignant and meaningful insights could be made regarding working fathers in Australia through reasonable comparison with known data sets in previous research. The study characteristics expressed in this chapter exemplify an ethically and methodologically rigorous research design and an excellent fit for purpose MMR methodology. These elements are of ethical and methodological rigour and are assets on this study. These are reinforced by the findings outlined in the next chapter of the thesis, the results.

Chapter 6 Results

This chapter outlines the overall results of the study. It provides the findings from the survey based on the empirical analyses necessary to adequately respond to the research questions. It also provides the main findings from the interviews. This subsequent qualitative analysis began with the generation of priori codes that themselves emerged from the research questions and the aspects of the survey data that were not adequately answered by the survey. At a macro level this chapter highlights fathers' use of parental leave, flexible work practices, and their relative influence on the distribution of work and care amongst couples in Australia. The results are presented in this order. The resulting analyses gives a clearer picture of what Australian fathers identify as a help or hindrance to them undertaking primary care for their preschool children. As the results show, these factors are located at the various sites where fathers' primary-earner role in the family intersects with the workplace and its overt and at times covert fetters on their caregiving contributions.

The main understandings from the following analysis highlights what fathers believe are the main barriers and enablers of primary caregiving of their preschool children. The analysis mirrors the main themes emerging from the literature review and the research questions that were subsequently generated. This included understanding the attitudes and beliefs of fathers towards primary caregiving, their actual caregiving practices, their ideal policy and practices around primary caregiving, and what drives the observed gaps between what they believe and aspire to in terms of caregiving and their reality.

Fathers' Attitudes and Beliefs on Work and Care

Fathers want to contribute substantially to the care of their children but as a primary earner, they also feel compelled to earn the money for the family. They are keen to take up a role as primary caregiver and believe both mothers and fathers should have equal access to their own leave to do so.

> ‘I’ve dreamed of being a father for many years and miss my kids dearly by day’s end. The more time spent in the early years the better’ (Father, survey respondent).

The survey asked fathers to respond to a series of 41 statements relating to key themes and attitudes raised in the literature on fathers, work, and care. These included testing assumptions and positions on primary breadwinning, known drivers of parental leave take up for working fathers, rights and responsibilities relating to caregiving, and various policy design features. The main responses from this section of the survey are highlighted below.[15]

- Almost 90% of fathers agreed they felt pressure to earn the money for the family yet only 33% felt it was natural that they be the primary breadwinner when children come along.
- 85% of fathers agreed they would step away from work to look after their baby for three months or more if there were no financial barriers.
- 87% agreed that each partner should have their own entitlement to a PPL for primary care.
- 78% agreed that mothers and fathers should have equal rights to such leave.

Despite this egalitarian and care-oriented outlook, fathers felt that balancing work and care was difficult and their role as a father and carer undervalued.

- Only 16% of the sample agreed fathers were as accepted as carers in the workplace as mothers.
- Almost 70% agreed the role fathers played in the lives of their children was undervalued by society.
- Less than 10% of the sample agreed balancing their career with care responsibility was easier than they imagined.
- Most fathers agreed they were just as attached to their children as mothers (80%).

Not all fathers unequivocally embraced the idea of swapping work for care in the preschool years. For example, only 33% of fathers agreed they would be interested in doing part-time work or job

15 Between 734–740 fathers responded to the attitudinal questions in the survey. Fathers were able to select ‘agree’, ‘disagree’, or ‘neutral’. Only ‘agree’ or ‘disagree’ response sets are quoted and represent the actual percentage of the sample.

share for family reasons, however this is far more than currently work part time in this sample and in the wider population of working fathers (at 3% and 4% respectively) (ABS 2012; Craig & Powell 2012). Whilst fathers did not feel part-time workers were less committed to their careers, they did indicate they were less valued in the workplace.

- Only 15% of fathers agreed that part-time workers were less committed to their career as full-time workers.
- Almost 60%, however, agreed that part-time jobs were not as valued in the workplace as full-time jobs.

Summary: Father's Attitudes and Beliefs on Work and Care

Taken together, the results suggest fathers have a positive attitude towards primary care. Fathers in the sample expressed a desire for access to primary care leave such as PPL and further suggested the workplace and society may be out of touch with their desires for primary caregiving of preschool children. The sample also revealed that leave for caregiving, such as PPL, and changing their standard patterns of work to provide care for children are likely to be considered differently. Far more fathers reported a willingness to take PPL than change their full-time work arrangements. This may be the result of stigma associated with part-time work for example, their primary earning status in the family, or the precedence given to mothers in terms of caregiving and part-time work. What is clearer from the attitudes and beliefs of fathers reported here is the existence of a discernible tension between earning and caring for primary-earner fathers.

The next section of the findings takes a deeper dive into these ideals and beliefs by examining the policy provisions that fathers report would support their adoption of a primary caregiving role.

Ideal Policy Conditions for Fathers

When asked about their ideal policy conditions, a relationship between rates of compensation and predicted leave taking emerged. As primary earners, fathers in this sample reported the rate of compensation for primary care leave deeply influenced how likely they would be to take up the

leave and step into the primary caregiver role. Importantly, this was not replicated when asked to predict the effect on their partner.

> 'The most important role for a man in life, for our future generations, is fatherhood. Leave for this needs to be flexible, paid, and for a much greater period than currently allowed' (Father, survey respondent).

This section of the survey asked fathers to respond to a range of questions relating to various policy models of PPL, including common employer policies both in Australia and abroad. It also assessed the utility of the current statutory PPL scheme.

Fathers were asked to indicate if the rate of pay would make 'it more likely', 'less likely', or 'have no impact' on taking up the leave. Fathers were further asked to anticipate the impact rate of pay might have on their partners' leave taking. Table 8 below shows the outcomes reported by the sample on leave take up by rate of compensation.

- Just over 86% of fathers said they would be more likely to take PPL when paid at their pre-birth salary rates. This contrasts with only 10% of fathers when the proposed compensation rate was the federal minimum wage.[16]
- Fathers reported the rate of compensation would have significantly less impact on their partner when deciding to take the leave. This held for all levels of compensation except when paid at 80% of pre-birth salary.

16 This is the current rate of pay for the statutory PPL scheme.

Table 8: Likelihood of Taking the Leave: Rate of Pay (self/partner)

Rate of Pay	Who	N	Less likely to take	More likely to take	No impact
Minimum wage	Self	744	398 (53.5%)	74 (9.9%)	272 (36.6%)
	Partner	754	283 (37.9%)	171 (22.9%)	293 (39.5%)
Pre-birth salary	Self	762	17 (1.8%)	659 (86.5%)	86 (11.3%)
	Partner	754	25 (3.3%)	543 (72%)	186 (24.7%)
80% of pre-birth salary	Self	745	232 (31.1%)	397 (53.3%)	116 (15.6%)
	Partner	742	154 (20.8%)	384 (51.8%)	204 (27.5%)
2/3 pre-birth salary	Self	738	391 (53.0%)	159 (21.5%)	188 (25.5%)
	Partner	737	242 (32.8%)	255 (34.6%)	240 (32.6%)

As expected, most fathers reported they would be 'more likely' to take PPL if the leave was paid at pre-birth rates of pay. The positive impact of pre-birth compensation rates appears to be stronger for fathers compared to their partners. In addition, when paid at the federal minimum wage, the majority of fathers in the sample further reported they would be 'less likely' to take the leave (54%). Interestingly, this directly contrasts with the predictions they made for their partners. For example, over 72% of fathers felt their partners would be 'more likely' to take the leave at this basic rate of pay.

In the main scenarios, where rate of pay was presented at a rate lower than pre-birth salary (80% and two-thirds of previous salary for example), at least 10% more fathers reported they would be 'less likely' to take the leave compared to their predictions of partners. This was in all cases but the minimum wage scenario, where the differences were even more pronounced. This strongly indicates that fathers are far from encouraged to take the leave when paid at the federal minimum wage.

Importantly, the fathers in this sample also felt that rate of pay would have less 'impact' on their partners compared to them. In a quarter to a third of cases in this response set, fathers said the

rate of pay would have no impact on their partner. Importantly, fathers reported similar levels of 'more likely' for both replacement and minimum wage scenarios (74% and 72% respectively) for partners only. This suggests that partners were considered by fathers to be less influenced by rate of pay than the fathers themselves.

To assess the relative strength of compensation rates on the reported likelihood of leave, McNemar's tests were used to explore differences in the likelihood of leave taking across fathers and their partners at the various rates of pay. Categories were collapsed to perform the analysis by combining either the 'more likely' or 'less likely' proportions with 'no impact' (Field 2013).[17]

This fits with the primary caregiver/primary earner model of the family and could also suggest the impact of compensation rate is gendered. According to fathers, some compensation appears to incentivise their partners leave taking compared to the high level of compensation necessary for fathers to consider the leave.

The results suggest there are significant differences relating to the impact of rate of pay across time. These analyses are presented overleaf in Table 9.

Table 9: Odds Ratio Calculations: Leave Against Rates of Compensation

Payment Type	Categories Collapsed	McNemar's Test Score	P Value	Odds Ratio
Federal minimum wage	More likely/No impact	56.54	< 0.01*	1.83
Pre-birth salary	Less likely/No impact	74.72	< 0.01*	0.40
80% pre-birth salary	Less likely/No impact	0.64	< 0.42	1.06
2/3 pre-birth salary	More likely/No impact	104.49	< 0.01*	2.29

17 Collapsing decisions were based on the most conservative scenario for each pair, collapsing the second highest proportion with no impact to allow the highest proportion to stand alone for testing against the combined proportion.

The odds ratios show that fathers are more likely to be impacted by federal minimum wages compared to their partners. The only non-significant difference across the partnership was at 80% of pay. Though there were significant differences when ‘more likely’ and ‘no impact’ were the collapsed category (odds ratio= 1.72, $p<0.01$), the more conservative test combination collapsing ‘no impact’ and ‘less likely’ frequencies does not yield a significant result. Fathers and mothers were both ‘more likely’ to take the leave at 80% rate of pay.

Additional insights from fathers on the relationship between rate of policy compensation and leave take up was also found in the questions on rate of pay and ideal duration of primary carer leave. Here, almost 30% of fathers reported they would not take the leave at all if paid at the federal minimum wage. This was significantly different to just 5% of fathers who would not take the leave at their pre-birth salary. Further analysis, using odds ratio calculations on X^2 proportions, showed fathers were 6.5 times more likely to report they would ‘not take’ the leave when paid at the federal minimum wage compared to when the leave scenario was set at their pre-birth salary.

Together these findings reveal important considerations for PPL policy development in terms of fathers and realistic support for primary care. The data suggests fathers have different tipping points in terms of policy take up for primary care. The analysis shows fathers in this sample believe they would be significantly more influenced by the rate of compensation than their partner, at all levels of compensation except for 80% of pre-birth salary, where no significant difference was found between fathers’ self-reports and their predictions of their partner’s response, based on odds ratio calculations $p<0.01$. According to fathers in this sample, any level of compensation appears to enhance the likelihood a mother would take the leave whilst lower levels of compensation make it ‘less likely’ the father would take the leave.

Whilst the pattern of reporting appears to suggest a gender effect, it is entirely possible that gender alone is an overly simplistic measure of influence on caregiving amongst couples. What may have manifested as a gender difference may be an expression of financial status prior to birth. Comparative research, including couples where the mother is the primary or equal earner, would help untangle this puzzle. In terms of the present sample however, fathers are unlikely to take the leave when paid at the federal minimum wage up to 80% of pre-birth salary. This exposes

significant flaws in the current statutory scheme if a redistribution of work and care amongst couples remains a practical goal.

Necessary Conditions for Primary Care

- Just over 55% of fathers selected replacement rates of pay as a necessary condition to taking up any leave to be the primary caregiver.
- A leave allocation of their own was the second most selected factor with 44% of fathers indicating this as necessary.

To complete the understanding of fathers' policy needs regarding primary care, respondents were asked to determine the conditions they felt were necessary in order to take up a primary caregiver role. A list of seven influences previously linked to fathers' take up of PPL was offered. Participants were asked to select the three conditions necessary for them to take up primary care for their preschool child. The outcomes are presented in Table 10. They show strong support for pay at replacement rates of pay (Broomhill & Sharp 2012). These findings mirror those of previous research such as Ray, Gornick and Schmitt (2009) and McKay and Doucet (2010) who provide a detailed analysis of provisions and their gender equality outcomes. These researchers emphasised higher uptake from fathers when leave is highly-compensated and/or part of a ring-fenced leave provision.

Further analysis of ideal conditions using confidence intervals shows that 'replacement rates of pay' and having a 'leave allocation of their own' (separate to the mother) are essential for fathers in taking up a primary caregiver leave. These confidence intervals are calculated by the formula $\hat{p} \pm 1.96\sqrt{\frac{\hat{p}(1-\hat{p})}{n}}$ $w$here $\hat{p}$=calculated proportion and n=sample size.

The primacy of compensation rates and ring-fenced leave for the father has important implications for PPL in Australia as both are completely absent from the statutory PPL scheme. This is no doubt a primary reason the current policy is rarely utilised by fathers (Esping-Anderson 2009; Martin et al. 2012, p. 25). This in turn places increased pressure on employers to support fathers as a primary carer through employer based provisions.

Table 10: Necessary PPL Conditions for Taking the Leave

Necessary conditions*	Number of Respondents	% of n	Rank
Replacement rates of pay	524	55%	1
Own allocation of leave	420	44%	2
More than six weeks of leave	338	36%	3
No breastfeeding issues	335	35%	4
Ability to take leave part time	233	25%	5
Superannuation	207	22%	6
Less than six months of leave	86	9%	7

* Respondents could choose more than one but a maximum of three conditions.

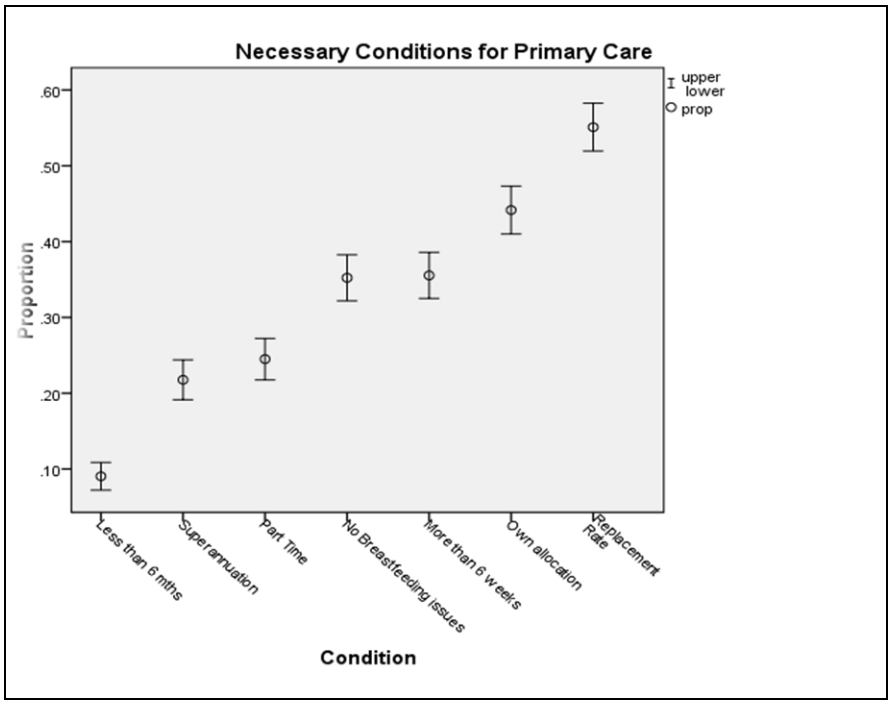
The calculations of confidence intervals for each factor show these two conditions are the most important features required by fathers of all the factors listed. These are overleaf in Table 11.

Table 11: Confidence Intervals (Necessary Conditions for Leave)

	N	%	N	%	N	%	Prop	Lower	Upper
Necessary conditions (replacement rates of pay)	524	55.1%	427	44.9%	951	100.0%	0.55	0.519386	0.582612
Necessary conditions (own allocation)	420	44.2%	531	55.8%	951	100.0%	0.44	0.410079	0.473202
Necessary conditions (more than six weeks)	338	35.5%	613	64.5%	951	100.0%	0.36	0.324994	0.385836
Necessary conditions (no breastfeeding issues)	335	35.2%	616	64.8%	951	100.0%	0.35	0.321901	0.382621
Necessary conditions (part time)	233	24.5%	718	75.5%	951	100.0%	0.25	0.21767	0.272341
Necessary conditions (superannuation)	207	21.8%	744	78.2%	951	100.0%	0.22	0.191438	0.243893
Necessary conditions (more than six months)	86	9.0%	865	91.0%	951	100.0%	0.09	0.072203	0.108659

The confidence intervals for each of these conditions were plotted for additional analysis. These are outlined below in Figure 11.

Figure 11: Plotted Confidence Intervals: Necessary Condition for Fathers



The plotted intervals provide an informal, yet instructive test of significance for the necessary conditions in this sample. These suggest with 95% confidence that 'rate of pay' and 'having a designated leave of my own' were the two most important policy provisions for fathers in this sample.[18] This places an increased importance on employer-based leave policies for fathers if a more even distribution of work and care amongst couples is to ensue.

The interview results support these findings. The couples affirmed that financial viability was the start point for any negotiation between the couple regarding the father taking up some of the primary care. Without the paid leave, the couples agreed shared care was without possibility unless the mother was earning a comparable salary.

18 Breast feeding and having at least six weeks of leave were found to be equal third in rank position, however the degree of overlap between these variables when the confidence intervals were calculated means these conditions might need to be considered more cautiously as an accurate representation of the samples' third highest priority.

Ideal Leave Duration

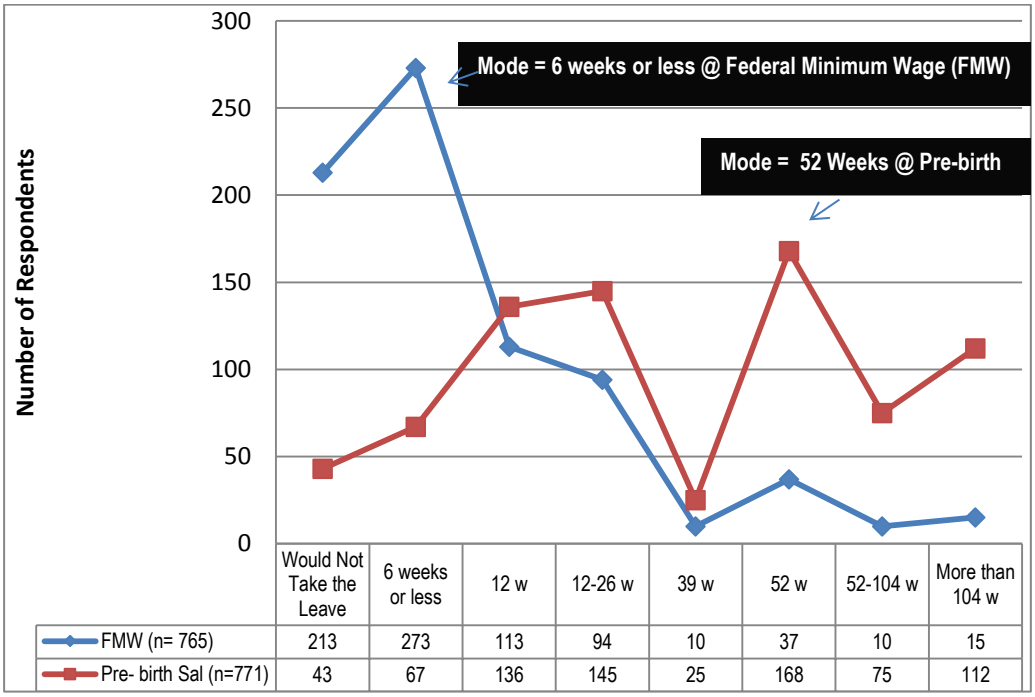
When the necessary policy conditions are met, fathers' ideal durations of leave increase significantly. Ideal leave durations for fathers extend to levels on par to available data on mothers' actual leave durations. This weakens perceptions that fathers are less 'care oriented' than mothers.

- When paid at replacement rates of pay, over half of fathers reported an ideal duration of leave as the primary caregiver in excess of nine months.
- In contrast, over 64% of fathers said they would only take six weeks of leave or less or not take the leave at all when paid at the federal minimum wage.

Further analysis, using Wilcoxon Rank Test ($Z = -17.844$, $p=<0.001$), showed these differences were both strong and significant. Fathers were more likely to report an ideal duration of leave comparable to mothers' statutory entitlement and actual leave from work when compensation rates were at pre-birth salary. This casts some doubt on the once popular notion that fathers are less 'care oriented' than mothers and that this difference explains the gender gaps in the distribution of work and care.

The similarity of ideal durations and their change based on rates of compensation are further outlined in Figure 12 overleaf.

Figure 12: Number of Fathers' Ideal Duration of Leave by Rate of Pay



The above analyses suggest that when ideal conditions are met, fathers report they are keen to take up a role as primary caregiver and for a considerable period of time that is comparable with mothers taking the full duration of basic entitlements under NES (12 months unpaid leave). Their ideal durations were also longer than current average maternity leave durations for women.[19] The above analyses cast some doubt on the once popular notion that fathers are less care oriented than mothers and that this difference explained the gender gaps in the distribution of work and care. The doubt surrounding this gendered precept is further reinforced when examining the response set on fathers' willingness to step away from work to care if full-time childcare was the only other option available.

To test the care versus work threshold, the survey asked fathers to decide from only two options and at various times of the preschool years. The survey asked:

19 The NES allows for 12 months unpaid leave for the primary carer with an option for an additional 12 months.

> ‘If caring for your dependent child and paid work became completely unworkable and you had to choose between full-time childcare in your local centre or you withdrawing from the workplace to care for them, which would you be more likely to choose?’

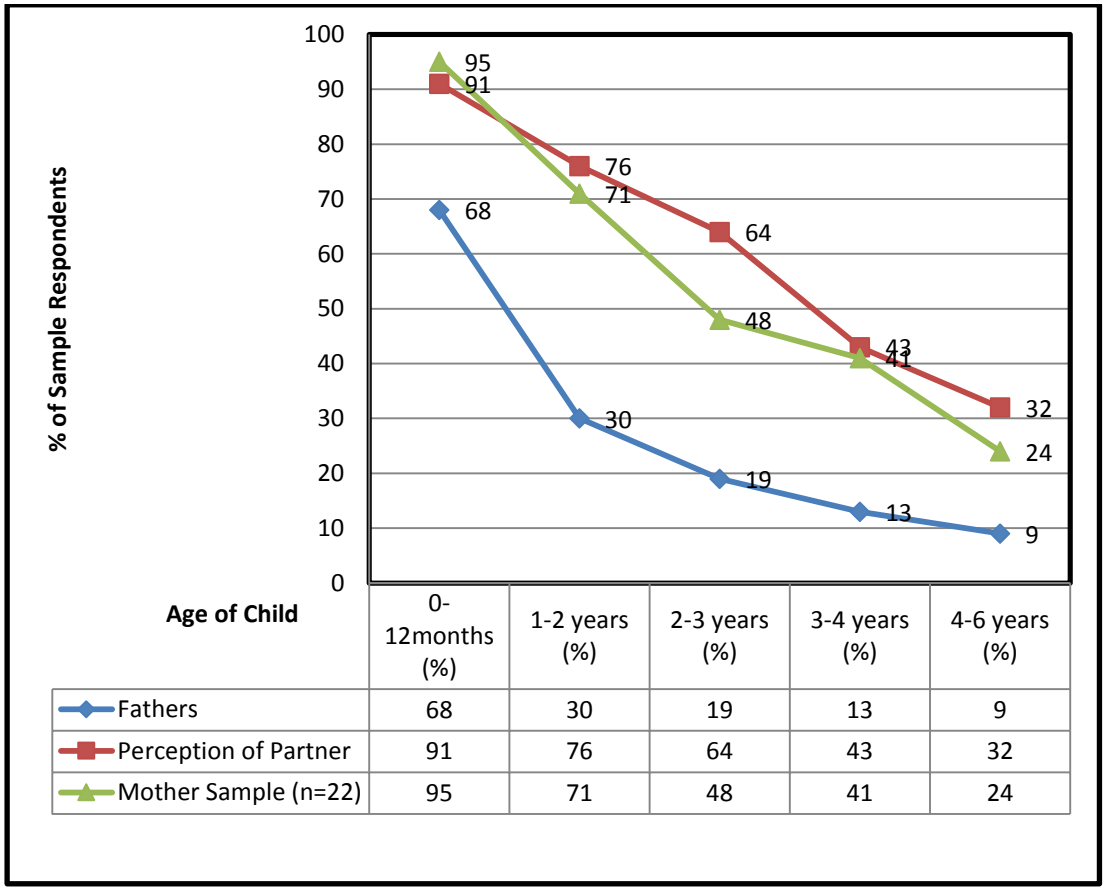
Fathers were also asked to indicate what their partners would do in the same scenario. Figure 13 overleaf shows the reports from fathers on their own and then their partner’s rates of withdrawal. Using odds ratio calculations on the patterns of withdrawal - mother versus father, $p < 0.00$), partners were considered four to five times more likely than fathers to withdraw from the workplace rather than place their child in formal childcare full time. These results show there were significant differences between fathers’ reports of their own withdrawal and their perceptions of what their partner would do. As they were significant across each age group based on fathers’ self-reports and their predictions of their partners we can conclude that fathers feel their partners are less approving of formal care arrangement than they are.

Given that several decades of research has found mothers are more likely than fathers to shape their patterns of work around the care needs of children, this result is hardly surprising. As the literature review showed, maternal workforce participation in Australia remains below the OECD average particularly during the 0–3 year age group (Baxter 2014). What is of note however, is at 12 months of age or less, the majority of fathers report they would sooner opt out of work than send their child to formal childcare. This trend aligns with previous research on care arrangements for preschool children that shows a preference for informal rather than formal care overall but perhaps most especially for children less than 12 months of age (Baxter 2013a). In terms of this sample and the differences across gender, it is noted that the threshold for opting out was lower than both their predictions of partners and the smaller partner (mother) sample drawn in this study. The results, however, do strongly suggest that like mothers, most of fathers in this sample did not find formal care appealing in the early stage of development either.

This finding has direct implications for the time periods in which father care may be most effectively encouraged and the delivery of equality generating PPL policy. If parental care is the preferred model of care in this age group, it is perhaps more effective (if not necessary) for fathers to also have access to a paid primary care leave for their children starting within the first 12 months after

birth. Providing a PPL for fathers may be an effective way of supporting the mothers' reattachment to work through a cost-neutral alternate care model that is compatible with both mothers and fathers care preferences for parental care for very young children. In this way, it is clear that childcare and PPL policy is not an either/or proposition for parents wishing to return to work and flies in the face of the current Coalition Government strategy that took PPL policy off the table in lieu of reforms in formal childcare.

Figure 13: Percentages of Sample Reporting Withdrawal Preferences



Summary: Ideal Conditions

The results suggest the appeal of taking PPL is deeply affected by rates of compensation for fathers. They are also most likely to withdraw from the workforce to be the primary carer for the child in lieu of formal childcare in the first 12 months after birth. These two findings together suggest the current statutory scheme will cement rather than transform the existing distribution of primary

care to mothers. At present, in the absence of access to a well-compensated leave policy through employers, primary care will almost certainly continue to default to the mother when they are the secondary earners in the family. This is the case in most Australian households. Improved childcare options are not likely to alter this gendered pattern of care too markedly, at least not in the first 12 months where parental care is preferred over formal childcare options.

Fathers' Participation in Leave and Caregiving

Leave for Care

In spite of their desire for a greater share of primary caregiving in the preschool years, it was the road less travelled for most fathers in this sample. Fathers reported work and care arrangements that fell far short of their ideals. Primary caregiving by fathers was exceptional overall and participation in PPL for care of their youngest preschool child minimal.

> 'Two weeks of parenting leave for fathers? This beggar's belief (sic). Prevailing attitudes in Australian society are very out of date. Fathers are expected to provide for their family financially, but subcultures also frown upon fathers who don't also provide domestic support' (Father, survey respondent).

Primary Care

The survey measured primary care in two ways. Lifetime primary care was measured by reports of any experience as a primary caregiver over the working life. Specific primary care was measured via reports of fathers' leave taking for primary care following the birth of their youngest preschool child.

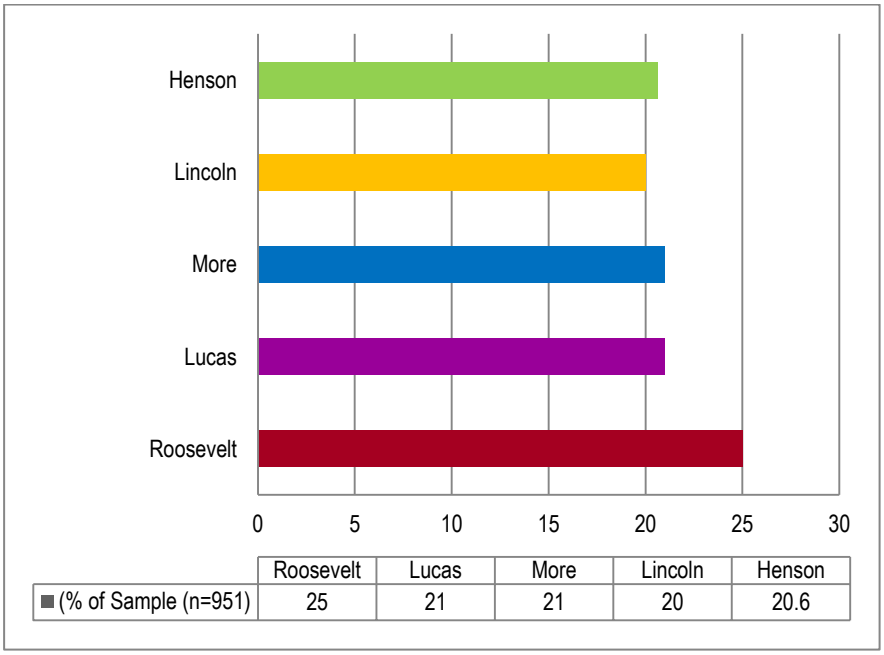
- ✓ Less than 21% of fathers reported they had been a primary caregiver for their children in their working life (n=951).

Figure 14, below, shows the proportion of the sample that reported undertaking primary care of a child at some point in their working life.[20]

Whilst 21% of the overall sample reported having had primary caregiving responsibilities over their 'working life'[21], further analysis shows this to be remarkably stable across employers in this sample, with no significant differences in the proportion of fathers reporting global measures of primary care at the enterprise level.[22]

The take up of primary care measured by specific leave for primary caregiving shows a similar trend. Only 15 fathers reported post-birth leave to be the primary carer. This represents around 2% of the overall sample. Of this group, three fathers reported taking unpaid leave. Most took up employer-funded PPL (n=6) and the remainder used 'other' paid leave types.

Figure 14: Proportion of Sample Reporting Primary Care in their Working Life



20 Sample numbers and public/private split by organisation can be viewed in Appendix 5.

21 'Working life' was defined as entire career to date.

22 For this analysis, one employer (Darwin) was removed from the analysis having no 'yes' responses to primary care. This was to preserve assumptions of expected frequency counts for chi square analysis.

Of interest in this analysis is the perceptions of primary caregiving and from a methodological point of view the challenges of surveys. On this question, a total of 55 fathers reported they took their leave following the birth of their youngest preschool child to be the primary caregiver. This represents less than 7% of the responding sample (n=782) not the 2% reported above. However, this former figure was likely to be erroneous. Further analysis of the data showed a modal duration of leave for 'primary care leave' was less than one month (four weeks) and the majority of fathers reported taking the leave immediately following birth. A common sense, logistical view of these durations and the temporal scope of the leave from time of birth might suggest an intervening event (illness of the mother for example) or reporting primary care for a sibling whilst the mother is in hospital may have been at play. A more accurate picture of primary care leave as intended and clearly defined by the survey was most likely to be represented, at best, only by those fathers who report their leave for primary care was taken after the child was at least six weeks of age. This is the earliest new mothers are permitted to return to work under the *FW Act (2009)*. And even then, paternal primary care leave before six weeks of age is likely to be exceptional as such a short maternity sabbatical for the mother it is very rare (Whitehouse, Baird & Hosking 2006). Inability to cross-check this data with the respondents involved (except those that were interviewed) is a limitation of the anonymous survey method. However, what we can reasonably assume from the overall picture drawn by the sample for this question is the fact that taking primary caregiving leave is not usual for fathers and is not likely to mirror the durations and patterns of mothers when this does occur.

On that note, there are few reliable national figures on the take-up rates of primary carer leave for fathers. One of the biggest obstacles is the conflation of various leave types across studies as outlined by Martin et al. (2012, p. 44). Farrelly and Whitehouse (2013) and Whitehouse, Diamond and Baird (2007) present excellent papers on fathers' leave taking but do not make it clear if this is paternity leave with the mother or primary care leave. They do however, touch on this issue of measurement fidelity and provide insights to the policy and the workplace barriers fathers are likely to face.

Much like the global measure of primary care and care leave, availability of PPL does not seem to have directly influenced PPL take up. Lincoln provided the most direct and generous PPL policy to fathers for example but the with public/private split on leave for primary care (n=55) did not show significantly more primary caregiving fathers. Additional analysis using each specific agency and the smaller sample of the most likely bona fide care policy takers (n=15) did not yield differential results. All failed to reach significance and show that offering PPL did not alter the proportion of leave takers for primary care.

Concurrent Leave

Whilst primary care was not a mainstream practice for this sample of fathers, this was far from being a sample of absent fathers. Most fathers took at least two weeks of paid paternity leave with the addition of annual leave or similar. The average leave at time of birth was 4.1 weeks. This leave-taking behaviour certainly aligns with findings elsewhere for paternity leave. The sample shows when paid paternity leave (concurrent) is available, the vast majority of fathers take it. This finding supports understandings of paternity leave found elsewhere in Australia. The *Phase 1 PPL Evaluation Report* (Martin et al. 2012, p. 10) for example found 92% of fathers took paid leave at or around the birth of their child when paid leave was available and for similar average durations. This is a stark contrast with the patterns of leave taking for primary care leave found in the preceding analysis.

Ad-hoc Leave for Care and Flexible Work Practices

Most (but not all) fathers reported utilising paid leave and flexible work practices so they could assist their partners in the care of the children.

To do so, fathers used a range of formal and informal mechanisms including carer's leave, annual leave and flexible work arrangements.

Ad-hoc Leave for Care

Just over 82% of reporting fathers used carer's leave and 81% used their annual leave for childcare purposes.

- ✓ Sick leave was used by a little over a third of fathers whilst 13% used leave without pay, flex leave or time in lieu.
- ✓ 5% of respondents did not use any of the leave options at all.

The types of leave and their frequencies are noted in Table 12 below.

Table 12: Fathers' Leave for Care

Leave Type*	Frequency	% of n
Carer's leave	597	82
Annual/recreation leave	591	81
Sick leave	249	34
Long service leave	102	14
Leave without pay	98	13
Flex leave/time in lieu	94	13
48/52 leave purchase	73	10
Not used any of these leaves	38	5
Career break	17	2

*Respondents were able to choose more than one option (n=727).

The most frequent leave for care was carer's leave and annual leave. Those who did not use leave at all for care cited the presence of an alternative carer (usually the partner or other family members such as in-laws or grandparents) as their back-up care.

> 'There is an underlying stigmatisation of men working part time and caring for children. On the ground, there is pressure and feelings that such men are taking it easy. This situation

is provided by anecdotal evidence e.g. the odd snide comment or listening to conversations in other work areas close by' (Father, survey respondent).

Flexible Work Practices

- ✓ Just over 64% of responding fathers reported changing start and finish times with 32% using work-from-home and telecommuting practices.
- ✓ No fathers reported using job-share arrangements.
- ✓ Fathers were more likely to not use any flexible work practices (24%) than work part time (7%).
- ✓ When fathers did not use any flexible work practices, their reasons were centred on lack of need, such as the partner was at home to do the caring.

Table 13 below illustrates the range of flexible work practices utilised by fathers in this sample.

Table 13: Work Adjustments to Accommodate Care

Arrangement Type*	Frequency	% of n
Flexible start and finish times	467	64
RDO/flex time	231	32
Telecommuting/working from home	206	28
Not used any of these	178	24
Compressed work	59	8
Part-time work	53	7
Shift work/non-standard hours	47	6
Job share	0	0

*Respondents were able to choose more than one option (n=727).

As Table 13 shows, flexible start and finish times, rostered days off, time in lieu, and telecommuting are the most frequently used work arrangements used by fathers to accommodate care of children. For those who undertook these arrangements, it was mainly as an informal arrangement, and not part of any permanent or ongoing work agreement. Making structural changes to usual work .

atterns was also minimal. Fathers in this sample were more likely to take an ad-hoc day of leave to look after a sick child for example; compared to making permanent adjustments to their work schedules to accommodate primary care.

Further analyses suggest it is more likely to be the 'structural' flexible work practices (e.g. part-time or compressed working week) that have a relationship to primary caregiving.[23] The multivariate analysis found no relationship between experience as a primary caregiver over the working life (global primary care) or the take up of primary caregiver leave (specific primary care) and using the non-structural flexibilities (e.g. working from home). There was however, a significant relationship between (global) primary care and making structural changes to usual work patterns and hours post-birth.

These results suggest a relationship between taking up a primary caregiver role and making structural changes to work patterns after birth. Critically, this finding does not elucidate the direction of effects. It is possible changing the structure of pre-birth work patterns simply allows fathers to undertake primary care more readily. Conversely, undertaking a primary care role for a time may encourage fathers to make longer-term structural changes to their patterns of work to accommodate care. Further research using a larger sample of fathers with primary care experience is needed to explore this issue more definitively. The present results, however, signal that fathers in this sample who made structural changes to their work practices were more likely to have had some experience as a primary caregiver in their working life.

Denial of Requests for Flexibility

A final aspect of the flexible work practices measured by the survey is the data collected on denial of requests. Eighty fathers reported being denied their request for flexible work practices (11%; n=741). The main reasons respondents report they were denied requests are detailed in Table 14 below.

23 Respondents were allocated to either group only once so number of flexible work practices did not result in multiple counts unless the respondent used both structural and non-structural practices. The respondent was added to both but only once.

Table 14: Main Reasons for Denial of Flexible Work Requests

Reason*	No. of Respondents*
Employer or manager felt it was unfeasible to accommodate such an arrangement	38
Business/productivity loss was considered too great	30
Employer did not accept that I had caring responsibilities	19
Request would set an unwelcome precedent	17
Employer did not accept I had a right to make such a request	16
Request was thought to create inequity/sense of unfairness amongst other employees	11
Request was thought to be unnecessary	9
Not sure	7
My performance would suffer	5
My performance was not considered 'good enough' to accommodate the request	2
Other	14

*Respondents were able to choose more than one reason.

The table and the free text 'other' reasons offered by the sample strongly suggest a wide array of explanations for being denied a request for flexibility. What is most interesting is the level of denial reported based on subjective criteria such as 'performance', or the 'number of people already on such an arrangement' in a team for example – criteria likely to be contra to policy positions. At present, flexible work requests are enshrined in industrial legislation including the New Employment Standards and the *FW Act (2009*). The employer is obligated to explore requests made on the basis of carer's responsibility and provide a written reason why such request cannot be granted. This is right-to-request not right-to-have granted, however the *FW Act (2009*) sets out the conditions under which employers might deny the request within which subjective criteria, such as performance and the number of other people on arrangements, are not in scope. As the table shows, in some cases rationale for denial appeared to have very little to do with the need for care or business-related

reasons why a given request could not be accommodated. Given the majority of arrangements in this sample were reported as 'informal' it may be difficult to confirm the accuracy of these reports against organisational data. What is clear, however, is that flexible work arrangements are a much-needed adjunct to work and family policy, and working fathers are far from being automatically approved for work adjustments to accommodate caregiving.

Summary: Leave and Flexible Work Practices

Whilst the birth of a baby is one of the most life-changing transitions of adulthood, the leave and return-to-work patterns following this event appears as little more than a 'blip' on the trajectory of many fathers in the sample.

Most fathers returned to work shortly after the birth of their child and few altered their patterns of work to accommodate care once they returned during the preschool years. Whilst the data shows fathers do assist in the care of their children, it is rarely as a primary caregiver even when leave to do so is available. Unlike primary care leave which was highly variable in both provision and take up in the present study, concurrent leave entitlements predictably clustered around expected norms in relation to national averages for paternity leave, public and private employer splits of leave durations, and the addition of annual leave onto paternity leave entitlements.

The use of family-friendly work provisions is similar. Carer's leave is a well-utilised provision for fathers in this sample, however, using personal leave days to care for sick children and for providing other support care needs was also prevalent. It may be that the current entitlements to carer's leave are out of step with the 1.5 earner reality where children need to go to formal care when mothers go back to work and often fall ill as a result of increased contact with other children in the group care setting (Baxter 2014).

The data also exposed the very narrow and prescribed ways flexible work practices were used by this sample of fathers that again reflected patterns found in research elsewhere. Whilst fathers are providing increased levels of care to their preschool children, they continue to do so within the parameters of their pre-birth pattern of work hours rather than make more permanent, structural

changes to their employment patterns. Importantly, the flexible work policies available to the sample did not alter the distribution of primary care across the couple. As found elsewhere, these fathers took a very narrow range of flexible work practices that do not support or sustain a shared primary carer role across the couple. In contrast, partners in this sample were reported to have altered their pre-birth patterns of work to accommodate primary care of children. Finally, denial of requests for work pattern changes appears out of sync with policy intent. Fathers have reported a range of reasons they were denied flexibility, with a considerable proportion of such explanations relating to factors outside current policy guidelines and based on more subjective factors determined by the manager.

These findings on workplace flexibility suggest that policy alone will not be the silver bullet for creating equitable work environments and supporting an improved balance of work and care amongst couples. Primary care does not always follow from access to the gold standard leave policy or broader workplace conditions.

Primary Care Arrangements in the Preschool Years

Once a care plan is in place it tended to continue over the preschool years. Mother-centred care remained the primary form of care for preschool children. Fathers' hours of primary care did not change significantly over the preschool years. Exclusive care by mothers did abate as the child aged but did not morph into shared care arrangements between mothers and fathers. Care transferred from mother-centred care to formal childcare arrangements.

> 'Regardless of any kind of moral commitment to equality of the sexes, in the first few months of life it will always be the father's job to carry the mother and the child by doing all the things that need to be done that don't involve caring for the child. That is earning the money and running the household. That being the case, the father is forced into the supporting caregiver's role mostly by biology. I suppose for many parents, that first six months or so is habit forming in terms of involvement in primary childcare' (Father, survey respondent).

The primary care arrangements for preschool children in this sample followed traditional gender patterns found elsewhere. Importantly, there was little change to these arrangements from birth across the preschool years. This was measured at birth–6 months of age, 6–12 months of age, and 12 months and older. When change in primary care arrangements was reported, care transferred from the mother to formal childcare and generally only for children over 12 months of age.

From birth to six months of age almost 93% of fathers reported the mother as the primary caregiver. This reduced to 66% for children older than 12 months of age. Formal childcare accounted for only 1% of the primary care arrangements reported from birth to six months. This increased by 9% when these same children were over 12 months of age. The proportion of care over the preschool period is presented.

The proportion of shared care between parents remained the same from birth. Those that started sharing tended to continue doing so. It did not increase substantially over the preschool period. There was no significant increase in fathers' hours of care for the children over 12 months of age. This descriptive analysis suggests that primary care arrangements do not readily change as the child ages. Until the child reaches school age, respondents reported mother care as the main primary care arrangement as shown in Table 15. Table 16 outlines the overall picture of primary care over the preschool years including formal and informal care.

Table 15: Primary Care Arrangements Across Time

Child Age	Most Utilised Primary Care Arrangement	Second Most Utilised Primary Care Arrangement	Least Utilised Primary Care Arrangement
Birth–6 months	Mother care (n=877)	Equal sharing of care (n=36)	Father* (n=11)
6–12 months	Mother care (n=620)	Formal care (n=51)	Father (n=16)
> 12 months	Mother care (n=380)	Formal care (n=60)	Father (n=6)

*Equal to care from family, friends, and formal care.

Table 16: Frequency and Percentage of Sample's Primary Care Arrangements

Primary Care Arrangement	Birth–6 months	%	6–12 months	%	Over 12 months	%
Mother as primary caregiver	877	92.71	620	84.58	380	78.5
Equal sharing of care mother and father	36	3.81	23	3.14	19	3.92
Father as primary caregiver	11	1.16	16	2.18	6	1.24
Formal care	11	1.16	51	6.96	60	12.42
Care from family or friends	11	1.16	23	3.14	19	3.92

To explore the significance of changes over time a multinomial logistic regression was carried out using 'mother as primary carer' as the reference category. A new variable which captured only those respondents with children over 12 months of age and had reported on the three time periods under assessment was used for this analysis to simplify the procedure. The output table is found in Appendix 6.

The results suggest there are changes to primary care arrangements across time but this is not from mother to father as the primary carer. Both mothers and fathers were less likely to be the primary carer as the child aged with care outsourced to formal childcare and family members as the child gets older. However, mothers were only 1.6 times less likely to be the primary carer when child was 0-6 months old compared to when the same child was 6-12 months of age. In turn mothers were 11.5 times less likely to be the primary carer when the child was 12 months of age or older compared to when the child was 0-6 months of age. As children grew older the likelihood of mother care decreased however their children were 9.35 times more likely to be placed into centre-based care as their main care arrangement when older than 12 months. For fathers, the changes in likelihood of primary care were not significant, indicating father care as a unit of analysis is negligible when assessing changes to primary care over time.

Importantly these analyses highlight the continuation of a gendered pipeline of care even after 12 months of age when frequent breastfeeding (and therefore physical dependence on the mother) is

greatly reduced. This shows factors other than the physical or biological bond between mother and child come to the fore in fashioning primary carer arrangements. When mothers were not the primary carer when their youngest preschool children were over 12 months of age these children were more likely to be placed into centre-based care (itself an overwhelmingly female industry) than any other care arrangement, including father care.

Together, the data shows the majority of primary care arrangements stayed the same from birth. Mother-centred care was and remained the main care arrangement across the preschool years. There was a significant difference between the proportions of exclusive care by the mother between birth and six months of age and for those children over 12 months of age. Table 17 shows the same pattern of primary care stability when using hours of care as the central measure.

As Table 17 shows, the mean hours of care from mothers reduced from 38 hours (per work week) from birth to six months of age to 19.38 hours of care when those same children were over 12 months of age. Conversely, there was no significant change in the mean number of hours of care taken up by fathers. Care in the 12-month age group shifted from exclusive care of mother to formal childcare.

Table 17: Pattern of Primary Care by Hours of Care

Child Age	Mean Hours Allocated (Fathers' Work Hours)	Mean Hours Partner Care	Mean Hours Father Care	Mean Hours Formal Childcare	Mean Hours Family and Friends
Birth–6 months	41.28	38	.80	1.05	1.41
6–12 months	41.01	33.1	.85	4.18	2.86
> 12 months	42.86	19.38	.91	16.70	4.35

Summary: Primary Care Arrangements

The data reveals that care of children in this sample was largely a female activity either through mother-centred care or through formal care arrangements (given the vast majority of childcare workers are women) (APC 2009, p. 466). Whilst mother-centred care remains the primary care arrangement for preschool children from birth, the mean hours of care provided exclusively by mothers does reduce as children get older. This is in line with previous research on maternal employment that show maternal hours of care to reduce with age of the child and the take up of paid work (Baxter 2014). Importantly, for the purpose of the present study, is the lack of change in fathers' hours of primary care over the preschool years. There remains a considerable gap between fathers' attitudes to primary care and the actual distribution of primary care responsibility amongst the couples. Although many fathers take leave for care and use flexible work practices, this has made virtually no difference in the allocation of primary care responsibility or average hours of primary care over the normal working week. Work and care for preschool children remains highly gendered even in father cohorts that have the will and potential access to policy through care-sensitive employers.

Ideals versus Actions: Influences on Primary Care Decisions

Only economically viable options for primary care were considered by fathers. Lack of access to a designated, paid leave for primary care is the key barrier fathers identified to taking up a primary caregiver role during the preschool years.

> 'I was fully prepared to be primary caregiver and happy to do so if needed but ultimately we chose to let my wife do that prior to returning to her work part time. If things had gone the other way and I was primary caregiver we would have been financially worse off due to less PPL for males and I think that's an unnecessary discrimination' (Father, survey respondent).

Fathers in this survey reported it was the economic feasibility and their 'partner's preferences' that most influenced their final primary care decisions. Fathers reported they and their partners attended

to the same three main factors of influence when making primary care decisions, however, these had a different order of priority according to fathers.

- ✓ Financial viability was the single biggest driver of primary caregiver arrangements for fathers across all three age spans measured by the survey (birth–6 months, 6–12 months, over 12 months).
- ✓ Partner's preferences were the second most influential factor for fathers followed by baby health. This was the pattern of reporting for fathers across all three age groups.
- ✓ In contrast, when fathers reported the main drivers for their partner in making the same child's primary care arrangements, their partner's preferences were noted as the biggest influence over care decisions. This was followed by baby health and then financial viability. This was also a consistent pattern across all three age groups.

The survey asked fathers to indicate the main factors they felt influenced them in making the primary care arrangements for their preschool child. This was measured at various stages of development: birth–6 months, 6–12 months, and over 12 months of age. Fathers were asked to rate the degree of influence each driver had on their primary care arrangement for their youngest preschool child using the scale 'highly influential', 'somewhat influential', 'minimally influential', and 'not at all influential'.

The main drivers of primary care were selected from a list of 12 factors suggested by the literature relevant to fathers and taking a primary caregiver leave.

These include:

- ✓ Baby health
- ✓ Partner preferences (for care)
- ✓ Financial viability
- ✓ Breastfeeding
- ✓ Availability of leave
- ✓ Your preferences (for care)
- ✓ Mother health
- ✓ Convenience – partner already caring
- ✓ Business/work needs
- ✓ Career aspirations
- ✓ Redundancy/unemployment
- ✓ Expectations of others

Respondents selected the factor that exerted the strongest influence on them in making their primary care arrangements. Fathers were also asked to predict the influences that affected their partner.[24]

Table 18 shows the three most frequently selected strongest 'drivers' from the sample over time. Table 19 compares the single strongest and weakest drivers of primary care arrangements according to fathers.

Table 18: Three Strongest Drivers of Primary Care Decision Making over Time (self/partner)

	Father			Father Report of Partner		
Drivers	**Birth–6 months (n=912)**	**6–12 months (n=710)**	**Over 12 months (n=589)**	**Birth–6 months (n=912)**	**6–12 months (n=710)**	**Over 12 months (n=589)**
Driver 1	Financial viability 27%	Financial viability 31%	Financial viability 40%	Their preferences 33%	Their preferences 32%	Their preferences 29%
Driver 2	Partner's preferences 20%	Partner's preferences 19%	Partner's preferences 16%	Baby health 19%	Financial viability 16%	Financial viability 26%
Driver 3	Baby health 13%	Baby health 10%	Baby health 16%	Financial viability 12%	Baby health 16%	Baby health 9%

24 Informal analysis of the mother survey (n=22) shows that fathers are remarkably accurate in their predictions of what drove their partner decisions. A table outlining drivers according to the mother sample is presented in Table 19.

Table 19: Strongest vs. Weakest Drivers of Primary Care Over Time

	Mother Sample (n=22)		
Drivers	**Birth–6 months (n=912)**	**6–12 months (n=710)**	**Over 12 months (n=589)**
Driver 1	Their preferences 45%	Their preferences 35%	Their preferences 30%
Driver 2	Availability of leave 18%	Breastfeeding 15%	Financial viability 30%
Driver 3	Financial viability 14%	Financial viability/Baby health 10%	Baby health 20%

There were no significant differences found in the drivers of care for fathers from birth to six months versus over 12 months of age groups. Fathers' reported financial viability as the core driver of care arrangements during the preschool years. Conversely, 'career aspirations' were consistently ranked least influential.

Some researchers have suggested that fathers are reluctant to take leave from work to care for children because of negative effects on their career, hypothesising that work and employment concerns are more critical to fathers than mothers (Haas & Hwang 2008). The data from the sample here does not seem to support these assumptions; at least in the context of the available choices presented in the survey. Few men in this sample indicated 'career aspirations' as a key influence on making primary care decisions. Over time, fathers' reports of the impact of 'career aspirations' on their care decisions changed little, ranking in the lowest three factors across all age groups. Only 'redundancy' and 'expectations of others' were ranked lower. There is however, a different perspective presented by the free text comments in the survey. Here, there is a notable level of concern regarding the workplace, managers, and future career progress that may impact primary care decisions. For example, fathers said:

> 'I'd like to be more confident that taking parental leave wouldn't adversely affect my job. Policy is one thing; your immediate manager's views could be different.'

> '… working flexibly has a very negative impact on career/promotional prospects. Difficulties in working from home are also contentious.'
>
> 'In terms of career, I am generally happy where I am for now, but if I was ambitious to move to the next level I know that going part time would definitely put that off for a while.'
>
> 'There is no point having policies for carer's leave and paternity leave etc. if in practice it is frowned upon for someone to take such leave.'
>
> '… career progression is more difficult for fathers who work part time to care for children.'

The comments imply that issues arising from the workplace may also have a role to play in the primary care arrangements made by fathers. The saturation of workplace issues in the free text comments suggest further investigation of the relationship between financial viability, workplace factors, and final primary care arrangements is warranted. This was a key aspect of the interview data analysis.

Survey Results Summary

There is compelling evidence in this sample of a disconnect between fathers' aspirations and desires to contribute to the care of their children and what they actually do in terms of primary care arrangements. This conflict is embodied in the following comment from the survey:

> 'Being a primary breadwinner as a father and having to spend long hours away from your children during their developmental years is exceptionally difficult and underrated in our society. I miss my kids lots when I'm at work, and generally only get any quality time with them on the weekends ... it's a very difficult role to balance and I wish I could give them more' (Father, survey respondent).

The economic viability of a given care arrangement is suggested as a critical determinant of paternal care contributions in particular. Access to PPL and its policy architecture is likely to play a

role in the distribution of work and care amongst couples. The survey data exposes a level of disappointment, frustration, and at times regret and loss from fathers because of confined access to an adequate form of paid leave for primary care. This suggest the workplace can and does hinder a more equal distribution of work and care amongst parents from becoming a reality. Fathers in this sample indicate these are the main barriers to achieving their desired level of involvement and care for their preschool children. A more detailed examination of these issues is included in the interview analysis.

Interview Insights

The interview data provides an enriched understanding of insights gathered by the survey. The qualitative data analysis reported here centres on two key findings from the survey that warranted further investigation – the process of negotiating primary carer roles amongst the couple, and the form and function of workplace influences on couples' decisions regarding primary care. These are presented concurrently to reflect the data collection sequence and to better highlight the nuances and complexity of decision making amongst couples.

The Process of Negotiating Primary Care Roles and Arrangements Amongst the Couple

Whilst the survey data painted a clear picture of the arrangements parents made for primary care of their preschool children, it did not reveal the actual process of making those arrangements and the various negotiations and trade-offs that may have been made by the couple in the process. In addition, 'financial viability' emerged as the main driver of primary care decisions for fathers yet this was only one of a number of factors that needed to be prioritised by respondents. It is not clear how these were weighted and reconciled in the decisions amongst couples.

The responses from fathers also showed that they perceived their partner to have been most influenced by their 'own preferences' for care of the child and above 'financial viability'. Together, these could suggest in-couple differences in decision-making rationale and/or the experience of gendered constraints in fashioning primary care arrangements. The inclusion of fathers who had

experience as a primary caregiver and leave taker in the interview sample provides an exceptional opportunity for examining these dynamics and their practical expression across policy conditions.

The Influences of the Workplace on Care Contributions Beyond PPL for Fathers

When asked about the most decisive influences on the making of their primary care arrangements, fathers noted 'financial viability', 'partner preferences', and 'baby health'. Issues related to the workplace were not selected from the available choices and did not rank highly in the overall weightings. In fact, the workplace-related factors were the least selected variables from the list. In direct contrast, the free text comments of the survey were replete with reference to the workplace, managers, and employers as both a barrier and enabler of paternal care. The way that the workplace is implicated in the work and care arrangements from the couple beyond leave provisions alone appears an issue for fathers and worthy of further exploration.

Negotiating Care Arrangements

Baseline Assumptions of Caregiving

Most couples agreed that at least six months of leave should be allocated to the mother alone so she can recover from birth and establish breastfeeding. A line of continuity amongst almost all couples at interview was the fact that the mother's recovery, breastfeeding, and bonding was the first priority cited by all couples in the making of their primary care arrangements during the first six months.

In almost every case where primary care by the mother was replaced with another care arrangement, including primary care by the father, it was only after six or more months of leave taken by the mother. Even the most gender egalitarian couples, with a father who had access to PPL, all mentioned breastfeeding and mother-infant bonding as critical and the main driver of the care decisions directly following birth.

> '… I wanted to be there for the first six months, because I know men and women are equal (sic), but in some cases the way that you take care and the attachment that kids have to

> mum, I think for six months I wanted to be with them' (Kylee, full-time worker/joint caregiver).

> 'Yeah well I guess if you're going to go through the hard slog of getting a baby, you want to spend time with it, and there's also the physical recovery that's got to happen and if you choose, or you're able to nurse your child, then that's a factor as well. I guess it's all of those sorts of things that tie in so it seemed the most logical choice that I would be at home first' (Mandy, part-time worker/primary carer).

Even fathers that had spent time as the primary caregiver agreed the initial period of leave was sacred for the mother.

> '… whilst it's great with the father–children relationship … it's obviously the mother–child relationship that is (initially) the primary one and Alison wanted to make sure that breastfeeding and all those core sort of things were done, so I continued to work' (Harry, full-time worker/joint caregiver).

Given the deep entrenchment of gender roles in families, it is perhaps not surprising to note many of the couples in this sample did not have any conversation about the primary care arrangements for their youngest preschool child. Both mothers and fathers assumed it would be the mother who continued to stay home and care for the children, at least initially:

> 'I don't think we ever really had anything in mind specifically, things just kind of happened and we kind of worked them out as we went. I don't remember ever having a conversation which said right when we have kids we're going to try and do this' (Roger, full-time worker/secondary caregiver).

> 'Not really, I think we assumed that Victoria would do it' (Gary, full-time worker/secondary caregiver).

> 'But I think in my mind; (asks partner) was it the same for you?; that it was always assumed that I was the primary caregiver?' (Angela, part-time worker/primary caregiver).

The lack of conversation and negotiation was particularly observed in those couples where the father did not have access to paid leave for primary care. If there was no leave available for the father, it was not considered necessary to discuss or consider any other primary carer arrangement.

Economic Feasibility

Couples only considered financially viable options for care. There was little report of discussions amongst couples regarding shared care when paid leave was not available to the father.

> ‘We never really talked about changing things; we didn’t really broach the subject. I guess part of it was that I've generally always been the higher income earner so that makes a big difference just from a practical sense’ (Roger, full-time worker/secondary caregiver).

> ‘To be honest … it was clearly financially driven, which also means we were able to skirt around any of the discussion around that, like saying ‘do you want to do it’, or ‘how well would you do it’, because we could ignore all those conversations because I’m just going to say, financially it will not work so let’s not bother’ (Gareth, full-time worker/secondary caregiver).

The ‘financial viability’ of the various care options was not, however, just about policy access. It included relative earnings amongst the couple, potential remuneration, and costs of alternate childcare. However, paid leave was the common starting place for all of the ‘primary care’ fathers.

> ‘The leave policy definitely took any of the financial questions out of the equation, so that made it very much a decision purely based on whether I wanted to be involved or not … it made a decision between career advancement I guess and family and involvement, and that was a pretty easy decision, for me anyway’ (Paul, part-time worker/joint caregiver).

> ‘I think it was driven in some part by finances and in some part by personal choice, but also what was available to us, so what work was offering in terms of what could we take off?’ (Mandy, part-time worker/primary caregiver).

> '… and if you're in a fortunate position … where you're both able to earn a comparable wage, then you know, the discussion becomes a lot more relevant and lively. If one of you – and typically, it can be women who are earning less, then it sort of automatically defaults to who's going to actually bring in more dollars at the end of each month? That person needs to work full time' (Samar, part-time worker/joint caregiver).

Primacy of Maternal Perspective and Desires

The selection of primary care arrangements appeared to follow from a careful consideration of the range of alternative care options possible in the context of the couples' economic situation. For example, Melissa reports how she weighed up whether to go back to work or not:

> 'I'm looking at what is the job and if it's really really the job that I want to go back to or not, some jobs yes it's good, working in marketing yes it's fine, but sometimes not really, I don't like the job, so no I'd prefer to stay home the whole time … if I have the opportunity to stay home, I will stay home' (Melissa, part-time worker/primary caregiver).

For almost all of the interviewed couples, even if paid leave was available for the father and he had expressed a willingness to care, it was the mother that appeared to have primacy in initiating and selecting the actual arrangements.

For example, Harry discussed his willingness to take time away from work if that was what Alison wanted:

> '… and Alison wanted to make sure that breastfeeding and all those core sort of things were done. So we talked about that and I was happy to work but I said, you know, if you want I'll take time off?' (Harry, full-time worker/joint caregiver).

Similarly, Noah was happy to take time away from work to be the primary caregiver for both his children but was equally happy with formal childcare at six months of age, leaving the decision up to his partner:

> ‘Look the decision-making process has really been what Michelle has been comfortable with frankly’ (Noah, full-time worker/joint caregiver).

Stephanie had the choice of returning to work and decided to do so for some money and independence. Interestingly, the lack of opportunity from her previous employer to accommodate a role that fitted in with Stephanie’s caregiving needs meant she left the employer altogether and found work elsewhere.

> ‘In my head I thought I probably won't go back to work but then I got to a point when I went I want to have a bit more independence and my money therefore I just want a little job that fits in’ (Stephanie, part-time worker/primary caregiver).

As Stephanie alludes to, her return to work was largely self-generated rather than prescribed.

Fathers also reported deferring decision making to the mother and this is likely the ‘partner’s preferences’ that fathers reported as a secondary influence on their own care arrangements in the survey. However, it is important to note that mothers were only able to choose from the ‘financially viable’ options set out for them by available leave from employers – thus ‘preference’ is not likely to be the best descriptor of this influence. Choices, however made, were usually constrained. If no leave was available, the couple rarely considered changing primary carer roles. If it was, it was an option considered only in the context of the mothers’ desire to return to work and comfort with passing care on to the father.

The above dynamic is well illustrated in this excerpt from Dale who discusses the negotiations he had with his partner Melissa prior to children coming along. It demonstrates both the deference to the mother’s choice and the mother’s explicit and implicit constraints within that process.

> ‘We discussed who would be staying home, or if anyone would be staying home, or not before we even had the first child … she had a uni degree, but couldn’t get work so she was just working in a shop, and I said to her well …we kind of discussed that she can either try and get a full-time job, like a proper full-time job, that’s stable like me. I said if you think you can get something like this and that's what you want to do, I wouldn't mind if I stay

> home, that's fine with me … so she said she'd rather look after the kids, but she had some hesitation because she didn't want to lose that knowledge or skill that she had. So she currently works at home on a small business … because then when I come home if she has to do something with her business like on the weekend or in the afternoon, then I can look after the kids while she does work she has to do' (Dale, full-time worker/secondary caregiver).

The Final Equation: Push and Pull Factors of Work and Caregiving

The rewards of return to work and continuing with their career versus a desire to primary care and fulfil a 'good mother' ideal, was a key tension mothers grappled with when selecting the final primary care options. This is illustrated in the following interaction from a couple who were keen to expand their family and had not really considered shared care.

When Tamara (the primary carer) was asked what she would do if Anthony wanted to spend time as the primary caregiver, Tamara's decision making rested heavily on how much she liked her job versus what would be best for the child.

> Tamara: 'I would not feel good at all. Well that's not true. If I knew Neil was with Anthony, then I wouldn't mind going back to work.'
>
> Anthony: 'You wouldn't do it voluntarily.'
>
> Tamara: 'No, I wouldn't do it voluntarily. I would not mind being back at work, but I feel strongly that Neil should be with one of his parents rather than in full-time childcare.
>
> Interviewer to Tamara: 'So would the preference be … you as carer first, then possibly Anthony, and then childcare?'
>
> Tamara: 'That would be my preference, yes.'

The availability and impact of the alternate care arrangements on children often underscored mothers' deliberations to return to work.

> ‘Look I’m under no illusions that it’s easier (here) and quite honestly if it wasn’t as easy I might not be working because I am choosing to work … but I mean if I didn’t have the support I’d probably would have chosen to stay at home … but as long as the kids are well looked after I think that was really a driver … they are, they’re happy’ (Alison, full-time worker/joint carer).

> ‘I guess, in our arrangement I actually feel that we’re also able to do that because we have an incredible support network that sits behind us. That is the families. And a nanny who is known to us through our family. Without having that support network behind us, I would’ve found it a lot more difficult to go back to work … even part time. It’s doable because we have a fall-back position. I know that some of my friends, who don’t have family members around ... and don’t have a backup network, have to make a decision around who’s going to stay home and care for the kids. And it typically is the mum’ (Samar, part-time worker/joint caregiver).

On return to work, the impact of alternate care arrangements on children remained the main determinant of work intensity for mothers and in some cases fathers (but to a lesser degree). Comparing the narratives of mothers and fathers suggests that mothers feel more responsible for the outcomes of care arrangements compared to fathers – revealing an implicit identity as the person responsible for primary caregiving even when they are not actually the primary caregiver. This is demonstrated in differing responses to changes in external support and care systems that make paid work possible for mothers. For example, asked what would occur if their support systems for caregiving were suddenly not available to them, Henry felt that formal childcare would be the obvious answer. His partner Samar however quickly identified she would sooner choose to reduce her work intensity in lieu of formal childcare.

> Henry: ‘But yeah, without all that sort of support, it would be day care.’

> Samar: ‘I think it would be day care? No, in all honesty, Henry, I actually think I’d be looking at scaling back. I’d roll back to three days, possibly two days. We might have to make some really significant financial sacrifices … but ...’ (Samar and Henry, joint caregivers).

Kylee (currently working full time), would also reduce her hours even though her husband does most of the instrumental caring during the week. Both parents work full time but Lyndon has more flexibility at his workplace than Kylee. Asked what she would do if Lyndon did not have the workplace flexibility he needs to manage care of the children whilst working, Kylee said:

> ‘In that case I wouldn't be working full time. No way’ (Kylee, full-time worker/joint caregiver).

Interestingly, most fathers within the couples described work care tensions as a ‘logistical nightmare’ whereas mothers more regularly framed the tension as an ethical or moral dilemma and something for them to solve.

> ‘… work and family is balancing unusual events like a sick daughter, which is happening to us today, as well as trying to contain the requirements for travel because obviously that imposes challenges both sides, for both of us, and then I guess the other thing is I personally am as keen as possible to work as much as I can during the day so I don't have to bring it home, but those three things I guess are the kind of key areas. I expect to then struggle with when trying to not work when you’re not at work’ (Rick, full-time worker/secondary caregiver).

> ‘… so I like the balance of having a bit of work but then also time with the kids, it’s quite a nice balance and I like that. But at the same time when things got a bit busy at work and you found yourself working overtime, that wasn’t great because you felt like you were … you were being disloyal to the kids’ (Bianca, primary caregiver).

Summary: Negotiating Care Arrangements

It is reasonable to assert from the findings here that parents place a high priority on physical recovery of mother, bonding, and breastfeeding in the first six months following birth. This appears to be the minimum ‘gold standard care arrangement’ for newborns and infants amongst the sample and it follows the data found elsewhere in Australia regarding post-birth care and leave.

The sample here went on to suggest that the primary care arrangements they end up with are not necessarily a first choice or preference (especially for fathers). The arrangements are a result of

weighing a range of work and care arrangements dictated by economic realities of the couple. ‘Financial viability’ is the factor men are more likely to use when they both assess and describe the drivers of their care decisions. They also appear to use financial considerations to describe what they will and won’t, and can and can’t do regarding primary care.

The actual arrangements of parents appear to be highly influenced by the mothers’ selections compared to the father. The ‘preferences’ noted by fathers in the survey appear to be in reality a considered evaluation of ongoing breastfeeding goals, health of the baby, enjoyment of work role or caring, and the range of alternative childcare options presented for the mother to consider. This is all in the scope of the boundaries set by monetary inputs and outputs in the couple. In this evaluation, paid leave for caregiving defines the range of possibilities. ‘Preferences’ do not adequately describe the constrained choices either mothers or fathers make for care.

Finally, primary care by the fathers is only possible (in most cases) through paid leave provisions by the fathers’ employer. The workplace is also inculcated into the decision-making processes amongst couples through the mother who appears to be the final arbiter on care decisions. The findings suggest the mothers’ attachment to the workplace and her career satisfaction prior to birth, remuneration rates, enjoyment of the work, and her perceived ability to manage her workload upon return are all likely to contribute to the decision-making process. These factors are largely within the scope of the workplace and thus the findings have significance for employers and social scientists seeking to enhance gender equality in the distribution of work and care amongst couples.

Workplace Barriers (Beyond PPL)

Whilst the survey noted access to paid leave is critical to almost all primary earners taking up a primary caregiving role, it is by no means a guarantee that primary care will ensue or that care responsibility will be shared when such leave is available. Not all fathers that had access to a paid primary caregiver leave for example took PPL. Conversely, some fathers that did not have access to paid leave reported providing considerable levels of caregiving for their preschool children including adopting the role of primary carer.

Beyond taking up a period of primary care, fathers are increasingly providing supplementary care and sharing care loads with their partner. This becomes particularly pronounced upon the partner's return to work and again supports previous findings on changes to fathers' contributions to care upon their partner's return to work (Baxter 2014).

The survey, in unison with previous literature, suggested that flexible work practices are central to such efforts. The interviews reveal that the likelihood of penalties and rewards for modifying usual work arrangements weigh heavily on decisions (particularly of fathers) regarding how much and in what ways they can materially contribute to the care of their children using flexible work arrangements. It appears, however, that achieving a gender-neutral and family-friendly workplace is a complex achievement that relies on much more than 'good' policy.

The interview data suggests that the degree of policy application and the immediate workplace climate rather than the broader organisational culture, deeply affect the caregiving contributions of fathers. The interviews exposed a number of other workplace processes and actions that are likely to influence the extent of work adjustments for care and by extension, the distribution of work and care amongst couples. These are outlined below.

Tolerance and Support for Caregiving

Information on employment and career-related penalties and rewards as a parent/worker are assessed when making decisions on work adjustments for care. Parents (and fathers in particular) do not take the available policy provisions at face value. Supplementary information is required, drawn mainly from the immediate work environment (climate). Of particular importance is the perception of the immediate manager and in particular, the degree of acceptance or resistance to working flexibly. Managers, figure heads and other key influencers are broadly configured as 'family friendly' or otherwise.

> 'I have had 'good' managers who understand, but there are a few people who still don't have good managers. They make faces when women have to rush home or there's a phone call from childcare that your kid is sick, come and pick her up. The managers are really bad

> at that, but my manager has been really very good all the time, I didn't have issues' (Kylee, full-time worker/joint caregiver).

Kylee's husband (Lyndon), who is also considered the primary carer for their children as well as working full time, also reported having a 'good' manager at his current workplace.

> 'I admit I really have a good manager, there's no question about that, but when it comes to fathers looking after a child it seems like it's a kind of taboo' (Lyndon, full-time worker/joint caregiver).

> 'I'm still with the same employer – but I've started a new position now where I've got different responsibilities and a different manager, so it's not quite as flexible as it was' (Anthony, full-time worker/secondary caregiver).

Information on the possible consequences of work adjustment for care is augmented with learning from observation and the experiences of others. Parents are watching and listening to how others are treated around them. For example:

> Roger: 'I guess it's probably fairer to say that when I came back after leave I had a different manager to the one I do now who took a less family-friendly view of things. I think he would have been fine if I'd said look I need this and that and the other but it wasn't the sort of conversation I probably would have initiated necessarily.'
>
> Interviewer: 'Even if you needed it?'
>
> Roger: 'I think if I'd needed it I probably would have gone and asked and look I don't think he would have said no. But probably not being in the situation himself I don't know if he necessarily got it … whereas the manager I have now is the polar opposite, gets it completely. And quite a few people here have the odd little family-friendly arrangement.'

When asked what gave him the negative impression of the manager in this context he noted that on several occasions he had 'heard' unfavourable comments from this manager regarding others' family-friendly work arrangements.

> ‘Well … he'd just get a martyred look and say an off-hand (a negative remark) … not to the person but in general … well … you sort of stash that stuff away for later’ (Roger, full-time worker/secondary caregiver).

Conversely, Bianca had heard poor things about her manager and was pleasantly surprised.

> ‘I was impressed at how well they looked after me actually, because I’d heard a lot of negative stories from other people about their jobs and job security coming back off maternity leave’ (Bianca, primary caregiver).

The experiences of the sample overall lend support to the suggestion that the quality of experience in an organisation regarding support and acceptance of care responsibility is deeply influenced by individual managers. What was striking about the experiences of this sample was how consistently managers were classified as ‘okay’, ‘family friendly’, ‘supportive’, or ‘not supportive’ and often without any direct experience of the manager as an arbiter of flexibility or work adjustment. It is clear managers’ drive the perception employees have of an organisation quite beyond policy and are always under scrutiny as a representative of an organisation’s level of ‘family friendliness’.

Flexible Work Practices as a Privilege

An additional insight that affected the use of family-friendly work provisions in this sample was the overall sense that these were a privilege and not an entitlement. Gaining approval for work adjustment was associated with characteristics not necessarily enshrined in the policy and beyond the need to provide care for a child. When asked why they (or others) were granted flexible work opportunities and care leave opportunities, the narratives from both mothers and fathers included a sense that they had in some way proved their worth to the manager.

> ‘Yeah, and I suppose you build up credit so that when you stay in the job for a while, you build up a few credits and then you can kind of ask for a few favours … if you’re new in your job you don’t ask for half a day off to go do something, because you’re worried that they’ll think you’re a slacker, whereas if you’ve been there for a couple of years, they know

you're good at your job and you're kind of confident to be able to ask for those things that rely on your boss going, yes, that's okay' (Sharon, part-time worker/primary caregiver).

'... part of the challenge that I had is that when I came back to work, I needed to be ... I had to renegotiate my role and change the situation before I could put together a strong case that said I could deal with this job part time' (Mandy, part-time worker/primary caregiver).

'So I'm very lucky with my employers and having, not actually a sympathetic boss, but a boss who just trusts me to get on with the job. So long as I deliver, pretty much that's okay' (Gareth, full-time worker/secondary carer).

'I know that my employer regards me quite well … obviously, they wouldn't have allowed me that workplace flexibility otherwise' (Henry, full-time worker/joint caregiver).

'I wouldn't say everyone (is trusted to work flexibly). I am. I think some people have had challenges with respect to that question. They just don't feel trust, whereas I haven't had that sort of problem at all' (Paul, part-time worker/joint caregiver).

'I think because Paul has tenure as well in the same organisation; he's built up a lot of 'goodwill'. I think that's probably made it easier for him to take leave' (Shelly, part-time worker/primary caregiver).

'… look it's pretty good … I'm not chained to a desk because I've earned that trust that Mandy spoke about, the hours and presence is a little bit flexible' (Rick, full-time worker/secondary caregiver).

Across the sample, work tenure, seniority, performance, trustworthiness, light workload, relationship with manager, and even the state of the external market and competition for talent all played a role in their appeals, approval, or continuation of flexible work practices.

Managers' characteristics were also viewed as an influence on outcomes including their age, child status, and gender. For example, Harry had noted that one manager in his proximity made frequent

comments that he was ‘always having time off’ picking up the kids and at one stage enquired why his wife couldn’t get the kids.

> ‘But he’s an older gentleman … he’s probably a bit more biased in his view of things but that sort of comment is what we would get by a lot of people I would find’ (Harry, full-time worker/joint caregiver).

Noah had a similar take on a manager’s perspective:

> ‘The newer, younger managers are much more open to flexible arrangements … whereas the older managers don’t understand why you shouldn’t be at your desk nine to five, and they're the ones that look at you sideways’ (Noah. full-time worker/joint caregiver).

And Henry:

> ‘There’s just far too many white males, 40–55 years of age, who are set in their ways. And have very … well, they haven’t had experience. But they’re just very set. The blinkers are on. They see it one way. If you don’t have this, then you’re not in. If you don’t have that, then you’re not in. It’s just black and white for them … it’s just Monday to Friday, these are your hours. Nothing changes. But nowadays, there’s so much more variety in people’s work arrangements and what they’re looking for. It’s almost like it’s too much to compute for some people’ (Henry, part-time worker/joint caregiver).

And, according to Henry and others in this sample, ‘these people’ were frequently those in power who drove the capability and employment decisions of the organisation, team, or division.

Gender Differences in Expectations from the Workplace

Whilst mothers’ experiences were far from being an automatic approval of their requests for work adjustment and flexibility, the request itself, and need for care was more accepted from mothers compared to fathers.

> ‘People are willing to juggle and adjust around women … and I guess, you know, it seems less so for a man’ (Mandy, part-time worker/primary caregiver).

This contrasts with the experience of many fathers upon their return to work which was well articulated by Roger.

> ‘I just sort of came back and kept doing what I was doing kind of thing … I sort of came back and got on with the job and that was it. And no one sat down and said okay do you need more flexibility or whatever or things are going to be different, I just kind of got on with the job really. The flexibility stuff only started to come up later when the kids got older I think and I guess when Stephanie went back to work … but until then it just never came up … no one asked’ (Roger, full-time worker/secondary caregiver).

Fathers received, and also perceived, more negativity and resistance to their requests for work adjustments and leave for care communicated through increased comments, questions, and at times cautions against making work adjustments and their career progress.

> ‘When I told my boss I was going to do it (take PPL), there was a definite ‘oh …’ because I had a managerial role at the time, he wasn’t keen on this … but clearly he went off to HR, and HR said ‘you don’t have a choice in this’. And that was that. So it was good, but (the leave) wasn’t promoted heavily to be fair’ (Gareth, full-time worker/secondary caregiver).

Asked what would be the likely response to him taking leave or adjusting work patterns for care on a more permanent basis than his current temporary arrangement, Gary reflected:

> ‘So I would imagine that people, they would actually say to me are you aware of what you're doing, this is your consequences … you're never going to be where you should be, you're never going to earn the money you should earn, or whatever it might be. So it would be almost like a conversation of that sort’ (Gary, full-time worker/secondary caregiver).

Fathers who were already working flexibly were often perceived by both management and even themselves as having a more temporary or optional arrangement compared to the arrangements of mothers in the sample.

Roger, for example, who had a weekly work-from-home arrangement in place speaks of this as a fluid arrangement that is altered by workloads – thus it is optional and subject to change depending on how busy he is.

> ‘For most of this year I've actually extended to a weekly work-from-home arrangement, which lately hasn’t gone so well because I've been too busy to be able to make it work. But in quieter times it's worked quite well’ (Roger, full-time worker/secondary caregiver).

James had a moment of insight and self-reflection on this issue when discussing his own voluntary ending of a regular flexible work arrangement negotiated before he was promoted. He noted that he himself had put a shorter time frame on the need when he initially applied for a regular work from home arrangement so his application would be received more favourably and seemed less onerous on the work unit.

> James: ‘And that was like when I was trying to organise things, to have that day off, I can remember writing in the email distinctly saying it would be only until early in the year. Like I put a timeframe on it. Like I felt I had to put a timeframe on it.’
>
> Interviewer: ‘Because you could have asked and been given a great four-day week permanently … but something stopped you? Was that perception? That kind of, it wouldn’t gel.’
>
> James: ‘Yeah … yeah, and that it may affect your work and the way people see you.’

His wife Sharon added her own insights to this discussion reflecting on how different her feelings are regarding her part-time role and the perceptions of others around her.

> ‘There’s only one time I have talked with (my boss) about whether my arrangements would change. It’s just been an assumption that I’m part time and if anything changes we’ll have a conversation about it at that point in time, where I wonder if with men there’s that assumption it would only be short term then? How long do you think it’s going to last? And would you get questioned more often about your work arrangements than me? No one ever

> asks me, 'Oh, so you are still going to work part time next year?' (Sharon, part-time worker/primary caregiver).

Both mothers and fathers noted that utilising work adjustments to incorporate caregiving was often perceived as being less committed to work, but this appeared more acute and stark for fathers.

> 'With male, senior managers? Yeah, probably see (it) as a bit of a – this guy's not serious about his career. He's a bit of a cop out, a bit weak. Yeah, give him a flexible work arrangement, but he's not going to be our next boss or whatever' (Henry, part-time worker/joint caregiver).

> '... when it comes to all these policies of equal employment opportunity and things like that I think it all talks about women. There is a discrimination against women if a woman, as a mother, as a pregnant lady, is not being provided an opportunity to have time off or work part time or work from home then honestly people will start jumping and talking about discrimination. But when it comes to men, I think its social culture that the man is always considered the main breadwinner so he has to work no matter what' (Lyndon, full-time worker/joint caregiver).

In addition to these attributions made by managers and other authority figures in the workplace, gendered paradigms of work and care find expression in the work and care arrangements pursued by parents themselves.

> 'I suppose I'd always assumed that I'd always be in full-time work because that's just the kind of thing that dad does. But I hadn't really thought about the other side of that and what mum would do kind of thing' (Roger, full-time worker/secondary caregiver).

> 'It's almost like there's a perception with men, for example, I know Harry in his last job got told why can't his wife go and pick up the kid?, why can't he work later?, I actually think it's the opposite (for me), whereas, my boss he helps you to go pick up the kids!' (Alison, full-time worker/joint caregiver).

Summary: The Workplace

The interviews have highlighted the significant impact of the workplace on primary care decisions amongst the couple. This suggests the availability of appropriate policy for fathers is only one of several 'workplace' factors that contribute to fathers' policy take up and their primary care contributions within the family. This has highlighted factors of influence that did not emerge in the survey responses.

The immediate work climate emerged as a considerable influence in the fashioning of the primary care arrangements with the immediate manager implicated as a pivotal influence. The data suggests that couples undertake a complex process of assessment before risking exposure as a worker with caregiving responsibilities or interest. They consider the reactions and responses to previous 'policy takers' from their manager, colleagues, and other senior figures. The level of support, tolerance and/or acceptance of 'family-oriented' work practices for both mothers and other fathers is included in the planning and negotiation of the private arrangements made by parents.

What is most striking is how consistently respondents reported being a parent worker was not the only factor that would secure approval for flexible work practices nor precipitated their application for such. This was particularly the case within this sample regarding the negotiation of flexible work arrangements that reduced work hours more formally. Few parents in the sample reported they would request work pattern changes (such as part-time hours) without consideration of the workplace and career consequences that may ensue. Almost all respondents on a flexible work plan reported approval of their requests were founded on parameters not necessarily set out in the policy. Things such as tenure for example, or their competence and trustworthiness were considered the elements that determined approval. Gender effects were certainly evident within this. Both mothers and fathers agreed caregiving responsibilities were more expected and readily accepted for mothers compared to fathers.

In addition, respondents tended to frame flexible work practices as a privilege and not a right. This was earned through a cluster of employee behaviours that proved one's unique value to the employer. The levers for proving this worth closely align with ideal worker norms including high

production, availability and work intensity. Together these factors suggest that legitimate caregiving responsibility plays a smaller role in the application and approval of flexibility arrangements than is assumed within the policy.

Chapter Summary

This chapter has presented the barriers and enablers of primary caregiving for fathers. It is clear that these reach beyond the provision of leave alone. Fathers reported that 'financial viability' and their 'partner's preferences' for caregiving were the main barriers and enablers to primary care for this cohort. The interview data further revealed that the workplace also has an influence on the decisions couples make in terms of primary care for their preschool children. This was expressed through the explicit and implicit sanctions and support for caregiving in the context of work, and the direct manager in particular.

By exploring the work and family issue from fathers' perspectives is appears it may not only be women who are penalised at work for taking a primary carer leave or altering patterns of work to accommodate caregiving. The data suggest the now well-known 'motherhood penalty' may actually cross gender boundaries and be a broader 'caregiver penalty'. This is likely to be related to notions of the ideal worker being full time, singularly focussed, and always available. This is a role women have historically found difficult to fulfil due to their primary caregiving responsibilities and make the workplace both directly and indirectly involved in the continuation of this outcome for women. As this study has revealed, this has a commensurate and corollary impact on fathers, their work, and care arrangements.

This study has revealed fathers are keen to share the primary care load particularly after their babies are six months of age. There is every indication from the sample at least that this is an attitude and desire likely to be shared by many if not most Australian fathers. Removal of the barriers to primary care for fathers appears to be a viable way to improve the distribution of work and care amongst couples and in the process, progress the gender equality remit. The current government policy in the form of the statutory PPL scheme and the recent childcare reform packages suggested in the 2015-16 budget continue to ignore this as an ideal or in practice. The

government however is not alone in their ‘blind spot’ towards men as carers and a potential source of improved gender equality. The workplace is also implicated.

The fathers, work, and care study has suggested dismantling ideal worker norms are as important as dismantling the notions of ideal carers in the great work and family debate. Providing adequate and designated leave for primary care for both mothers and fathers is a vital first step in the transition to a gender equal workplace and by extension a less gendered experience of parenting. The sample in this study have resolutely indicated support for these changes. They have urged employers to move beyond cognitive biased training and diversity practices that singularly focus on being an employer of choice for women. A more holistic, gender mainstreaming approach that nurtures true gender equality and expectations for both women and men, and mothers and fathers in unison with broadening conceptualisation of an ‘ideal worker’ is necessary (and quite likely sufficient) to complete the gender equality project and achieve gender justice for all.

This is the data platform from which the following discussion and recommendations for future research and action are made.

Chapter 7 Discussion

This chapter reviews the main findings from the fathers, work, and care study. It explores each of the key outcomes and attends to the central research questions posed by the study. This discussion returns to the theoretical frameworks outlined in Chapter 4, contextualising the main findings within Bourdieu's Theory of Practice and the gender mainstreaming platforms of Teresa Rees. Together the chapter presents an in-depth review and understanding of the results of the study and maps a way forward for engendering the level of transformation needed in policy and practice if shared care of preschool children is to become a reality.

In 2005, two researchers from the United States began a thought experiment of sorts asking, what it would take to engender a dual earner/dual carer a viable choice in American society.

'What would it take to make dual-earner/dual-carer arrangements a viable choice for American families? For mothers and fathers to share the caring, women, and especially men, would need opportunities and incentives to shift hours from the labor market to the home when their children are young. When their children are older, women would need opportunities to shift a modest number of hours from the home to the market, while their male partners would need opportunities to do the reverse. Both women and men would need employment arrangements that allow them to take temporary breaks to care for children and options for high-quality, reduced-hour, or part-time work that do not impose excessive penalties in wages, benefits, and job advancement' (Gornick & Meyers 2005, p. 23).

Much of the knowledge base for the solutions provided by Gornick and Meyers (2005) are derived from the Nordic nations in the OECD cohort and their wealth of research on equality gains through paid parental leave. An underlying assumption of the solutions posed by Gornick and Meyers (2005) above is the transferability of EU policy solutions and desires to the American social and political culture. This is not necessarily a given (Orloff 2008). The present study has also sought to explore this assumption within the Australian context and, after recognising that the research base here in Australia is particularly lacking on fathers that are central to these reforms, the present research asked:

According to primary earner fathers, what are the barriers and enablers to shared primary caregiving amongst parents during the preschool years?

The results from this study indicate that financial viability, partner aspirations, and workplace factors for both members of a couple have a critical and interdependent role to play. These influences play against the public and employer policies available to parents. It shapes their primary caregiving decisions and most specifically, who stays home to care, who works, and for how long.

This study was established from a literature review that revealed a paucity of research on fathers in the context of work and care arrangements in Australia. Both theoretically and methodologically, working fathers have not been included in the sampling frame of previous research on this issue. The experiences and insights of fathers in terms of primary caregiving has largely relied on indirect reports from mothers and their estimates of paternal care hours, or has been measured via a narrow examination of fathers' participation in flexible work practices without the necessary exploration of the more structural flexible work practices such as part-time work and compressed work weeks. These are important because they are the practices that would make shared care a realistic option for parents. Neither approach adequately captures the unique and nuanced supports and constraints on working fathers in undertaking a primary caregiving role in the family as well as a career, and its corollary impact on maternal employment and broader gender equality.

The literature review also noted the long history of international policy promoting paternal caregiving. This work has centred on father care in the European Union and has resulted in a much more comprehensive body of knowledge on fathers and primary care in the international arena than currently exists in Australia. The contrast between European research cohorts and Australia's culture and the political economy suggest international experience and knowledge may not necessary apply to Australian fathers nor adequately express their work and family needs (Orloff 2008). Thus, the international data on fathers and primary caregiving has been useful for guiding the present study but is unlikely to accurately respond to the main research questions raised in this study. These factors, along with the increased interest from employers in building a more gender equal experience at work and in the home, recommends a deeper understanding of fathers, work and primary care in the Australian context is required. The present study responds to this need.

Main Findings

The preceding results and analysis suggest the distributions of work and care amongst Australia's contemporary couples may be the result of several interdependent barriers to caregiving for fathers. The international evidence implied that the financial consequences of fathers taking a step back from work to provide care would be highly relevant to decision making and access to paid caregiving policies would be decisive. This was partially affirmed in the present study.

The barriers to primary care indicated by fathers in this sample, however also presented a more nuanced and complex decision-making process at play amongst couples. This extends beyond economics and policy alone. For example, not all fathers who had access to paid leave in this sample report taking up the opportunity to be a primary carer, and participation in primary caregiving was low overall. Importantly, this was in contrast to a strong desire to share primary caregiving responsibility with their partners and reporting egalitarian attitudes towards work and care.

The fathers in this study explained this anomaly as a silent and sometimes intangible 'lock out' to primary caregiving partly from the absence of a legitimate and supported alternative to breadwinning in the family and additionally, the impost of an ideal worker norm within their employment context. What was also revealed is that the majority of fathers were not at ease with these gendered divisions of labour. The one and a half breadwinner model that dominated the study sample ran counter to the shared care model they and their partners aspired to enact prior to children.

These factors suggest that financial viability (and by extension paid policy for primary caregiving) are necessary but not sufficient platforms for a more equal distribution of work and care amongst couples. It appears that a lack of overt support as a working parent with primary caregiver responsibility influences fathers and the decision-making process amongst Australian couples. This in many cases leaves primary care firmly in the hands of mothers and quite literally by default. This has critical implications for the broader gender equality endeavour at both the workplace and in the home.

Together, the above conclusions are drawn by the sample's responses to the research question noted above and the following subsidiary research questions that were attended to in this study.

- ✓ What are fathers' attitudes and beliefs regarding work and caregiving?
- ✓ What do fathers actually do in terms of leave practices and adjustment to their pre-birth work pattern to accommodate caregiving?
- ✓ How do fathers explain differences between their ideal and actual caregiving arrangements in the context of their workplace policy and their partnerships? How are the decisions negotiated in these contexts?
- ✓ What are fathers' ideal policy conditions to engage in shared primary care arrangements with their partner?

The results of these enquiries and their implications for a more equal distribution of work and care amongst contemporary couples is present below.

Attitudes and Beliefs: Fathers' Aspirations for Primary Caregiving

Fathers in this study reported markedly egalitarian attitudes when it comes to primary caregiving and their preschool children. A majority felt they should participate equally in the primary care of their children and have access to their own pool of leave to do so. The survey further showed 85% of fathers would agree to step away from work to look after their baby for three months or more if there were no financial barriers.

Despite this positive attitude towards paternal care, most fathers felt shared care arrangements would not be feasible or well supported at the workplace level. Their role as an earner/carer was considered undervalued and unattended in policy and practice. Most respondents reported they did not feel 'as accepted' as caregivers to their children compared to mothers in the workplace and most felt that the fathers were not as valued as parents compared to mothers overall. Ninety percent of fathers reported feeling pressure to be the breadwinner for the family, yet, less than 33% felt being the breadwinner was a 'natural role' for the father to play. Perhaps most significantly, most fathers felt strongly about their young children receiving parental care in the first 12 months after birth. In this sample 63% of fathers reported they would be more likely to step away from the

workplace to care for their child when younger than 12 months of age if full-time formal childcare was the only other option. Their partners unequivocally agreed.

Whilst it is acknowledged that aspirations are far removed from practices, what these findings highlight is that fathers do not necessarily see the father role as synonymous with breadwinning alone, or the converse for their partners (maternal caregiving). Fathers reported they were very open to pursuing shared care arrangements with their partners. The narratives examined in the interviews suggest this openness to caregiving could derive from a broader shift in the perceived role of fatherhood in the family from breadwinner to active parent combined with an aversion for non-parental care of children when younger than 12 months of age. Thus, fathers think they should in principle share care more equally and are not comfortable with outsourcing care to formal care arrangements in the first 12 months after birth. This makes the first 12 months after birth critical for fathers in making care arrangements because it is where they are most averse to non-parental care alternatives, and likely most open to enacting their gender equal attitudes.

As will be examined in more detail below, the data has also shown care arrangements are influenced by a range of factors outside the fathers' desires and attitudes towards parental care. In this study, father's ideals and aspiration for care did not reconcile to the actual decisions and arrangements for care. Most of the respondents mirrored the current family composition in Australia, with the fathers as the primary breadwinner and the mother as primary caregiver combined with part-time work as the child develops (Baxter, 2013a). The present sample, as elsewhere, were not always able to overcome the obstacles that fathers identified hindered their contribution as primary carers. Arrangements for a more equal distribution of work and care amongst couples fell far short of the aspirations that fathers had for their caregiving in this sample. It is further contended that this disappointment might be shared by fathers more broadly in Australia.

Actual Arrangements for Primary Care

Less than 21 % of the sample reported having had primary care of their children in their working life and only 55 of the 951 fathers taking part in the survey reported taking leave after the birth to be the primary carer for their youngest preschool child. Further analysis of this subset of fathers

showed this primary care to be for short periods of time compared to mothers. This was a duration of days and weeks rather than the months and years typical of mothers. As such, despite reporting a desire and sense of responsibility to contribute to the primary care of their preschool children, few fathers in this sample achieved this and even those that did, failed to mirror the maternal pattern of extended caregiving or longer-term adjustment to pre-birth work patterns for shared care. It was for all intents and purposes short-term primary caregiving being reported with few cases of fathers taking a significant step away from paid work for care. Whilst the data in this study revealed that some fathers did do some primary care, we have a much longer road to travel in terms of true models of shared care for preschool children in Australia.

The leave patterns of fathers further revealed that most fathers took concurrent leave with the mother after birth and not primary caregiving leave such as parental leave. On average fathers reported taking a total of 4.1 weeks of all leave types after birth, which stands in sharp contrast to the average of 32 weeks women take after birth of their children (ABS 2011). Formal childcare remained low for children under 12 months of age aligning with the vision of quality caregiving for young babies and children as synonymous with parental care for very young children. Furthermore, this pattern continued across the preschool years. Most respondents reported the mother as the primary carer over the entire preschool period. This mirrors patterns of care found in the previous research in Australia and abroad (Baxter 2013b; Lundquist et al. 2012; Stueve & Pleck 2003).

Together the findings affirm that even egalitarian-minded and well-positioned fathers (being white collar workers within large Australian employers) continue to adopt a support rather than primary or equal caregiving role in the family. The leave taking in this sample remained restricted to short term, concurrent leave with the mother immediately after birth. This applied even to the many fathers in this sample that had access to well compensated and formal policy support as the primary carer.

A final observation of the data on actual care arrangements for fathers is the evidence that they remained at the periphery of those flexible work practices that might support a shared care arrangement. Fathers did report using some of the flexible work practices available to them in the workplace to attend to caregiving. They altered their start and finish times for example or worked

from home at times for care. They also utilised carers leave to tend to sick children when required. In contrast, however, they remained absent from the structural flexibilities available to them such as part- time work or compressed work weeks. This aspect of their post-birth work adjustments for care aligns with the attitudinal data that showed many fathers felt part-time workers were not as valued in the workplace compared to full-time workers. It may also explain why less than 8% of the sample in this study reported undertaking changes to their usual work patterns at any time in their career. Most interestingly, this stands in stark contrast to the actions of their (female) partners. Almost all worked part time or not at all at time of survey.

Together these results strongly suggest that fathers are 'open' to participating as a primary caregiver but that actual caregiving remains highly gendered. Fathers' role in the caregiving arrangements after birth appears restricted to augmenting primary care by the mother or caregiving from elsewhere, including family and formal day care when the child is over 12 months of age.

Barriers to Primary Care

A further aspect of this study was to examine how fathers might explain any disconnect between their aspirations and beliefs regarding caregiving and their actual experiences and arrangements.

Respondents reported 'financial viability' and their 'partner's preferences' for care as the main barriers or enablers to contributing as a primary care giver. The interview data further revealed that the workplace mediates the degree of influence these have on the actual care arrangements. This comes from the provision and support of leave taking for primary care and the flexibility and job contexts managers offer to parents post-birth. Interesting this was quite separate to policy offerings according to fathers. Almost all respondents in the interviews (fathers and mothers) spoke of the workplace and the direct manager as a dominant influence operating when the child's care arrangements and return to work plans were being made. Whilst policy was noted as one of the necessary conditions for paternal primary care, the returning job role and flexibility on offer to the mother or the father too, the degree of support for future promotion, both likely and expected work intensity, and other workplace accommodations were identified as central to the making of shared care arrangements amongst the couples. This was all connected back to the direct line manager

for both partners. Managers were labelled as ‘family friendly’ or ‘non-family friendly’ by respondents. This understanding from the interviewees was echoed in numerous comments from the survey respondents on this same issue as outlined below.

> ‘I'd like to be more confident that taking parental leave wouldn't adversely affect my job. Policy is one thing; your immediate manager's views could be different’ (Father, survey respondent).

What is most interesting about these findings is that so much emphasis has been placed on workplace policy and culture in generating gender equality in the work and family domain. However, it appears climate (considered here as the immediate work environment) and linked to the direct manager have a much stronger influence on the final outcomes and care arrangements. Managers it seems remain the gateway through which any policy is utilised as well as the way employees feel about taking such leave. In this way, line mangers appear to act as barriers or enablers to shared care. This data implies that a manager’s personal attitude to earning and caring appears at least as important as the policy regime (both public and private) in supporting a more equal distribution of work and care amongst couples.

Ideal Policy Conditions

Fathers in this study recommended some clear policy developments if primary caregiving was to ensue. Whilst fathers tend to continue in their working life much like they did pre-birth, they were clear that this was not what they ideally wanted and noted paid policy as the necessary platform from which to build on their primary caregiving aspirations.

Fathers in this study identified that father-specific paid leave at replacement rates of pay were the necessary start point of considering taking up a primary care role for their preschool children. To have this leave available at or around 12 months after birth and perhaps on a part-time basis were other strong preferences indicated in the survey. Respondents showed that rates of compensation and whether the leave was an allocated and non-shared pool of leave had very strong influence on fathers agreeing to take up the leave for primary care. This mirrors findings elsewhere showing that

fathers are reluctant to take from a family pool of leave because they consider mothers have a more 'rightful' claim to have this time with the child (McKay & Doucet 2010). This sense of maternal privilege around PPL policy has driven much of the Nordic PPL provisions that have specifically supported if not compelled fathers to take up some of the primary care responsibility for children. Policy levers such as ring-fenced leave on a 'use it or lose it' basis are a hallmark feature of Nordic PPL policy for example which was designed to overcome fathers own sense that PPL was not rightfully theirs if it was etched from a shared pool of family leave.

The fact that highly-compensated, segregated leave for fathers is not a mainstream option available to many working fathers in Australia has no doubt influenced the results in this study. The writer also contends that this has likely contributed to existing patterns of work and care amongst Australian couples. Even the more contemporary statutory PPL scheme that emerged in Australia in 2011 has done little to address the existing gender divide on leave and primary care. At present the statutory PPL scheme for example is paid by default to mothers and at the basic minimum wage. With policy emerging as a baseline requirement for fashioning a more equal distribution of work and care amongst parents, the implications of PPL are clear. With less than 21% of fathers in this sample for example having access to an express and supported paid policy for primary caregiving via their employers (those employees from Logan)[25] and the statutory system paid well under the average median wage for fathers, modern parents rely on employers to make up the shortfall and provide adequately paid paternal leave for primary care. Without access to this the sample has made it clear that couples are far less unlikely to move beyond the gender traditional roles of father as primary earner and mother as carer.

Taken together the results have shown the willingness of fathers to take up a primary carer role but also the complexity of doing so. It appears that shared care arrangements amongst couples might be exceptional in every way with most couples opting for the traditional pattern of mother as primary carer and father as full-time worker. Such an outcome might be expected given the sampling frame of the present study. As a sample of primary earners and the fact that almost all respondents agree

25 Whilst some leave could have technically been available in the public employers this was not designated leave nor expressed in the enterprise agreements at the time of survey.

they would not undermine their family financial stability to provide care, shared care was only ever likely to occur when paid leave was available for this. What is instructive however, is that even in those cases where leave was available, not all fathers availed themselves of this and when they did it, was not the pattern of leave taking and caregiving that we could consider equal to mothers or shared. Leave for primary caregiving purposes was considerably shorter than the national average of mothers and emerged as a complex decision-making process that was predicated firstly on a mother's decision and preferences to return to work which involved several workplace factors from both parents moderating their agency.

Overall the barriers and enablers of shared care identified in this study suggest it is not only working mothers who face penalties for taking a primary carer leave or altering traditional patterns of work to accommodate caregiving. The survey data highlighted the critical impact of financial viability and access to adequate, father-specific leave for primary care. The interview data in particular shed light on this suggesting the 'motherhood penalty' found in previous research may cross gender boundaries and be a broader 'caregiver penalty' applied to working parents in the workplace. This means even if the appropriate policy is there for the taking, fathers may still resist taking up such leave despite their caregiving aspirations. These outcomes are no doubt influenced by the long-held notions of the ideal worker as full-time and always available. This is a role woman have historically found difficult to fulfil due to their primary caregiving responsibilities. Thus, the workplace is both directly and indirectly involved in gendered outcomes of work and care and its corollary impact on fathers as carers and women as workers outside the home.

Theoretical Accounts of the Data

The findings outlined in the preceding discussion are amenable to closer inspection through several concepts within Bourdieu's Theory of Practice from Chapter 4. They do offer some potential explanation for not only the highly-gendered outcomes here but its universality and persistence across policy and cross-cultural contexts.

Firstly, whilst fathers may have their own personal views on the distribution of work and care and in this case highly egalitarian ones, they may be restricted in exercising their own agency within this and activating their care preferences. This may occur for several reasons.

Firstly, to use Bourdieu's terminology, new fathers are likely still trying to 'work out the rules of the game'. Though working men have been playing on the 'field' of work for some time, when they become fathers they find themselves playing on the field as a parent worker. Whilst the field on which they play has not changed as such, their capacity for status inducing play has altered. First time fathers may be particularly vulnerable in contemporary society because they come up against pre-established rules of the game they once mastered but now find harder to meet. They also find a resistance to any change in their play (Jenkins 2014) and with a corresponding alteration of expectations from others in the field such as that of 'home'. Access to the levers of capital and status on the field of work might become restricted the more caregiving responsibility the father has and thus takes away from their time and scope on the field.

Like the fathers in this sample, working dads transition at birth from an independent worker with somewhat unfettered freedom for production, to a working father that entails a level of responsibility and focus to be elsewhere. Fathers likely acquire the requisite cultural and symbolic capital for status and security within their field of play as a single worker, and as such, can embody those taken for granted assumptions and values, or what Bourdieu termed the 'doxa' of that field. In this case it is high visibility at the workplace including long hours, high work intensity, and almost unrestricted availability to the enterprise for high productivity.

Like many fathers explained in the interviews, prior to birth fathers cultivated both status and capital by fulfilling these ideal worker expectations. This status was predicated on an unwritten potential for labour hours rather than the outputs alone. Availability in this sense operated as a kind of currency in itself. What is produced it seems was less important than what can potentially be produced. This loss of status or currency is often experienced by women who work part time and even if they return to the same job. There seems a general idea that being in the office less means they are somehow less able to produce proportionally. This might also explain why fathers almost

unequivocally agreed that part-time roles were less valued in the workplace and were less appealing even though they agreed part timers were no less committed.

Overall the barriers and enablers to primary caregiving by fathers suggest it is not only working mothers who might face penalties for taking a primary carer leave or altering traditional patterns of work to accommodate caregiving. Thus, the workplace as a field is both directly and indirectly involved in gendered outcomes of work and care and its corollary impact on fathers as carers and women as workers outside the home. In Bordieuan terms, becoming a parent worker seems to disrupt a player's ability to perform to the existing rules of the game and simpatico between the rules of the game and one's ability to play to them. Firstly, fathers' availability, and visibility on the field may at least initially decline if he was to share care with his partner. With contemporary women expecting instrumental care from fathers for the children it is reasonable to suggest fathers feel torn and locked out of favour in both the fields of work but also at home, and their own feelings and needs notwithstanding.

As one father in the survey noted

> 'I want to be primary carer for my children but finances, lack of opportunity, and lack of support from the workplaces forces a choice – work or care' (Father, survey respondent).

Fathers also noted that staying back to finish work, attending to a crisis, or attending to work-related travel become far more complex, if not impossible to carry out at pre-birth intensities. These importantly were all identified as status raising commodities on the field prior to birth. For example, some fathers from the interviews noted they found it very difficult to leave work early when they have care responsibilities.

> 'If we look around at dads who I work with, who have young children like me, they always work back because they get their wives or partners that are at home caring for the children, or picking them up, or working part time but I have felt it at times where I have to put down a project or a piece of work and say 'sorry I have to go, I have to get my kids from day care'. And you get this look from, usually from non-parents, like I'm on part time and I'm leaving on time, everyone else is here finishing their work' (Father, interview 1 participant).

> ‘In work there is a bit of, you do cop a bit of grilling if you say ‘I’ve got to go and get the kids’. So (its) a different culture’ (Father, interview 7 participant).

This sometimes subtle undermining of fathers as carers practice may also explain the consistency in short-term leave taking of fathers. Most fathers take some leave after birth of their children. In this sample, most fathers took between 2-4 weeks of paid leave and negligible unpaid leave. This mirrors patterns found elsewhere in Australia studies (Hosking, Whitehouse & Baxter 2010; Whitehouse, Baird & Hosking 2006; Whitehouse, Diamond & Baird 2007). Under his theory of practice, Bourdieu might view the doxa driving the lack of primary caregiving for fathers at both the behavioural and policy level, but it further dictates how much time away from work is differentially acceptable on the field for each parent after birth for both fathers and for mothers. For fathers who are assumed to be the secondary carer for example, the doxa dictates that leave patterns are short, close to or immediately after birth and concurrent. It is designed to ‘help’ the mother. This pattern of leave is further reinforced in the doxa of the field of work through the orthodoxy (such as policies, documents, and programs) that express caring and primary caregiving through a maternal lens. This and the lack of working mothers in visibly significant or powerful positions on the field further reinforce the unwritten ‘doxic’ wisdom of the workplace that the ‘best’ players are those without caregiving responsibilities because the higher status players are not primary caregivers. The lack of take up of PPL by fathers and the narrow way in which fathers in this study and beyond use flexible work practices after birth mutually reinforce this. Thus, gendered patterns of work and care continue to play out in the habitus of the players on the field.

The mutual reinforcement between the doxa and habitus is critical under Bourdieu’s Theory of Practice because working fathers both confront and re-create their circumstances on the field (Jenkins 2014). It is important to note in the context of the current findings that the fields of play examined in this study (work and home) are far from universal and the very arbitrary nature of the doxa from a field means different rules can apply to different players and different status players in the same field.

This is reflected in the leave durations of the sample being close to national averages for example. The arbitrary nature of the doxa means duration of leaves can alter across cultures and contexts

(Japan's national average for example is much shorter for men and longer for women, Sweden's is shorter for women and longer for men when compared to Australia) but the overall pattern for men and women as mothers and fathers is prevailing. Like status players watch each other. This supports Pierre Bourdieu's assertion that doxa is indeed arbitrary and recreated because it is derived from the sum of agent's actions which are in turn limited by the scope of those actions both observed and enacted. Bourdieu noted:

> 'Each agent wittingly or unwittingly, is willy-nilly a producer and reproducer of objective meaning… it is because subjects do not, strictly speaking, know what they are doing that what they do has more meaning than what they know' (Bourdieu 1977 in Jenkins 2014, p.7).

It is this process that might explain why it would be 'acceptable' for fathers to have a few weeks off after birth and yet this would be all but unthinkable for a mother. The more that mothers take longer leave, and the more that fathers take shorter leave, the more this pattern and the rules are reinforced and limit the agency of the players once more.

In terms of the present sample it also appears the later part of Bourdieu's assertion above might also hold true. What people actually do in terms of caregiving is perhaps a bigger influence than their own attitudes, beliefs, and preferences. For example, in this study there was a disconnect between the attitudes and aspirations of fathers and the actual primary caregiving arrangements they made. They also reported that financial viability drove their actual decision making. Yet at least 20% of the sample knew they had access to well-compensated leave for primary care (employees from Logan). In theory, this made financial viability a moot point at a practical level. Very few fathers however, took PPL (practice) in the sample even when it was available. Thus, agents on the field of play do not, as one might assume, 'know better and then do better' and knowledge and capability have less influence on the doing and practice than we might expect.

Observing the practices of others and what happens to others who do not follow the doxa of the field also serves to reproduce habitus and was examinable in the present sample findings.

Respondents referred to this ‘on field’ learning directly and noted the impact of what others did as having an influence on the arrangements they made.

For example, Rick followed the lead from a staff member from another area of the business who reached a little ‘legendary status; because he was the trail blazer in terms of taking the leave available to be the primary carer. Taking leave to be the primary carer became known as doing the Jerome’.[26]

‘I’ll tell you why this happened. I was standing in the office talking to someone and it only happened by happenstance and I was like – for a while there this what I did was known as the ‘Jerome’ and he was like ‘Well I’m going to take three months off to go and hang out with our daughter’ and I was like ‘What? I didn’t know you could do that’ and it became, after this one guy did it, it became quite culturally acceptable in the business for guys to do that’ (Rick, secondary carer).

This means individual practice (habitus) may be moderated by direct experience with other dominant players. For example, a line manager refusing PPL or an application for flexible work practices. It might also be shaped by indirect forces such as observations of others and the way attempts to change the ‘rules of the game’ are received. As such some players are influenced directly through overt restriction of making their own rules.

> ‘I have experienced firsthand that career progression is more difficult for fathers who work part time to care for children … what the policy says and the views of your manager is another story altogether’ (Father, survey respondent).

Others however, learn this from observation. Roger for example recalled that his work and care arrangements were influenced by the actions of his manager not towards him but towards others in his immediate work climate. In this case he noted he avoided discussing a flexible work arrangement with his boss in spite of knowing the policy provided for such. When asked why he did not approach this manager he said,

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26 Name has been changed to protect the identity of the parties

> ‘I heard him make (negative) remarks … not to the person but just as an off-hand remark. You sort of stash that stuff away’ (Roger, secondary carer).

The fact that this particular father was a human resources professional at the time and responsible for providing leadership on issues such as diversity and inclusion was not unnoticed. Countless other examples were presented from parents of practices and observations trumping knowledge and belief. The face-pulling observed by Kylee (see page 204) and the leave taking of others noted by Rick which commenced a chain reaction of fathers in the immediate work environment to take some level of leave for primary care gives credibility to this concept. Bourdieu theorised that what you do *reflects* as much as it *reinforces* a practice, and it appears to be supported by the outcomes of the present study.

The largely unconscious elements of the process of habitus and doxa also give rise to illumination of the study results through two more critical elements of Bourdieu’s theory of practice. That is the concept of symbolic violence and the related concept of rational choice.

As noted in Chapter 4, Bourdieu was at best, wary of rational choice theories. Rational choice frameworks are somewhat common in the gender, work, and care domain and are often used to explain and predict the decisions parents make in terms of maximising benefits and minimising costs within the context of their preferences (Esping-Anderson 2009). What Bourdieu had noted regarding choice-based theories however is that choices are themselves largely constrained. Bourdieu instead insisted that agents are limited in their choices on the field. Their play is dictated by a set of doxic rules that over time become their habitus and internalisations which is largely unconscious. It is at the intersection of doxa and habitus that symbolic violence becomes instrumental to examining decision-making processes including work and care arrangements for preschool child amongst couples (Webb, Schirato & Danaher 2002).

The outcomes in this sample appear to support this hypothesis because the decisions fathers made with regard to their work and care contributions were limited firstly by the availability of paid leave, but also by their partner’s assessment and availability of policy, workplace and individual schemas of care and parenting, work, and career. If rational choice theory held in these situations all fathers

with access to paid leave and a desire to contribute to the care of their children would take it. This was not the case in this sample.

In addition, the majority of fathers in this sample reported financial viability as the most compelling factor in their primary care decision making. Yet closer examination of this factor and particularly from the interviews, showed that what is financially viable was itself constrained and predicated on a series of limited individual options dependent on employer and the particular couple. Financial viability was therefore more than just re-compensating fathers for leave taken for caregiving. Financial viability also included consideration of caregiving on fathers' careers, their future earning potential such as promotions, for example, and how the job would fit with their partners' preferences and needs. Importantly, their own preferences in and of themselves failed to yield any level of influence and yet in contrast their partners preferences were central.

These factors suggest that Bourdieu's Theory of Practice, and not rational choice theories, may hold a more encompassing explanatory power in the context of the present findings because it considers the context of the choices made as well as those available to an agent at a single point in time, how they are exercised, and to what degree. The negotiation of primary care arrangement amongst couples clearly requires the consideration of factors beyond just a simple cost benefit model. It is not for fathers or for mothers simply a matter of choice or whose choice is more important or influential. With much of what one chooses to do being both implicitly and explicitly restricted by the other, it is what Bourdieu considered to be a form of violence against free choice. Bourdieu termed this action as 'symbolic violence' (Jenkins 2014).

One core strength of Bourdieu's theory in this study is its theoretical scope to consider the many intangible and unseen forces, rules, and sensibilities that are difficult to measure in the work and family domain. As noted in Chapter 4, symbolic violence is a construct that is largely unconscious. Bourdieu argued that symbolic violence shapes practice because it feeds into the doxa of the field and the individual's habitus via unconscious processes where agents legitimise and comply with the various restrictions and privileges given to agents on the field (Webb, Schirato & Danaher 2002). Scholarly reflections on the highly gendered fields of work and care commonly employ

Bourdieu's theory of symbolic violence as an explanatory lens for outcomes where a behaviour is at odds with one's intention and desire (Jenkins 2014). This was observed in the present study.

For example, many of the parents at interview talked about their behaviours and responses to restrictions as choices and did so in a way that did not consciously recognise the prescribed nature of their choices or the implicit ways that their own behaviours contribute and reinforce the offence. For example, one respondent highlighted that the organisation gave her a choice when to work and how to work, but then went on to say that the corollary demands were restrictive but ultimately her choice because she was unable to comprehend an arrangement where she could have both an important job and flexibility for caregiving.

> 'Myself and a lot of my colleagues, it's all iPad at home, you're responding at eight o'clock at night, because you've got a part-time role, but you've got to keep the project rolling. So you do, it's a choice thing, you do it when you can, it's not like you're stepping aside from the child to do it, but you do that stuff to keep the job rolling'
>
> (Sharon, part time worker/primary carer)

Symbolic violence may also play a role in the direct negotiations off the field of work and in the field of home. This time the violence is unwittingly perpetrated upon the fathers through assumptions about privileging of care to the mother. The interview data suggested that that not all women were keen to have the father at home with children on a primary carer arrangement. Some mothers in the sample felt strongly the leave should be theirs, and if the father wanted to take a primary care role it should be later in the developmental period and only if they wanted to 'give up' their leave and return to the enjoyment of work. In these cases, there were definite restrictions in the practices of fathers this time hindered by the dominant player in the field at home – the mother. This was expressed in the narratives of several mothers in the interview sample such as Tamara who considered the leave 'her leave', and would not 'feel good' if she had to go back to work just so her partner could stay at home. Others expressed similar sentiment, such as Kylee, who argued on the one hand that men and women are equal, but later noted that the attachment to the mother is perhaps more important.

Symbolic violence might also be examined in the way in which many couples did not even discuss the primary care arrangements prior to birth, with both assuming that the mother would take up the role as carer in most but not all cases. Fathers almost always expected the mother would want to stay home, and if not, should stay home to breastfeed. This in itself is another un-interrogated assumption and restriction on mothers who are subtly compelled to embrace breastfeeding and by extension staying with the child as part of her embodying the 'good mother' role. Mandy was one such mother who felt both entitled and obligated to spend the first six months with the child, yet her narrative framed this as a choice. As previously noted on page 196 she framed the 'hard slog' of pregnancy as both the driver and justification her logical choice to stay home with the baby initially.

Conversely most mothers who did not consider the father as a primary carer did so under the guide of their primary breadwinner status, which was not at any time a negotiated role either. Once parents are locked into these roles it is extremely hard to unravel a symbolic violence indeed and what Esping-Anderson (2009) termed the great 'Gordian Knot' of our time.

Conclusions

The results of this study demonstrate that fathers are indeed locked out of primary caregiving for their preschool children. Fathers reported that 'financial viability' and their 'partner's preferences' for caregiving were the main barriers and enablers to primary care. The interview data further revealed that the workplace also has an influence on the decisions couples make in terms of primary care for their preschool children. This appears to manifest through the explicit and implicit sanctions and support for caregiving in the context of work, and the actions of the direct manager of both the mother and the father.

Together these findings suggest that paternal care of children may be subject to some unique constraints. Primary care decisions appear to be driven by a range of influences other than access to paid policy alone. The specific gender contract of the couple appears to play a role and specifically in terms of the partner's preferences for care of the child. By exploring the work and family issue from fathers' perspectives this study has highlighted that it may not only be women who are penalised at work for taking a primary carer leave or altering patterns of work to

accommodate caregiving. The data suggest the now well known ‘motherhood penalty’ may actually cross gender boundaries and be a broader ‘caregiver penalty’. This is likely to be related to notions of the ideal worker being full time, singularly focussed, and always available to the employer. This is a role women have historically found difficult to fulfil due to their primary caregiving. As this study has revealed, this has a commensurate and corollary impact on fathers, their work, and care arrangements.

The results of this study give a clear indication that removing the barriers to primary care for fathers could be a viable way to improve the distribution of work and care amongst couples and in the process, progress the gender equality remit. The current government’s PPL policy and the more recent childcare reform package before parliament at the time of writing in March 2017, continue to ignore this as an ideal or in practice. The government however, is not alone in their ‘blind spot’ towards men as carers and a potential source of improved gender equality. The workplace it seems is equally implicated. On this basis, the recommendations for reform arising from this study are pitched at both the government and enterprise/ employer level.

Chapter 8 The Road Ahead: Recommendations and Future Research

This study has suggested dismantling ideal worker norms are as important as dismantling the notion of ideal carers. Both paradigms keep men locked out of family life and tied predominantly to work. Without access to any legitimate leave for primary caregiving, escape from this cycle is unlikely and has direct implications for women and their financial equality. Providing adequate and designated leave for primary care for both mothers and fathers is a vital first step in the transition to a gender equal workplace and, by extension, a less gendered experience of parenting. The sample in this study have resolutely indicated support for these changes. They have urged employers to move beyond simple fixes such as cognitive bias training and diversity practices that singularly focus on being an employer of choice for women. A more holistic, gender mainstreaming approach that nurtures true gender equality and expectations for both women and men, and mothers and fathers in unison with broadening conceptualisation of an 'ideal worker' appears necessary (and quite likely sufficient) to progress equality and gender justice for all. Teresa Rees' gender mainstreaming framework that moves solutions further away from tinkering and tailoring and into a more dramatic and wholesale transformation of both policy, practice, and compliance is an ideal pathway for improving the gendered distribution of work amongst couples and addressing the implicit and explicit barriers and enablers of this negative state.

Outlined below are a series of recommendations and suggestions for future research and action on improving the proportion of fathers who take time away from work as a primary carer. They are based on adopting a gender mainstreaming approach where all aspects of the enterprise (employer and government) are reviewed and policy, systems, and processes are assessed and reviewed with the specific implications of such on women as well as men.

Employers

Building a gender-equal organisation relies on a commitment and aspiration to becoming more than an 'employer of choice for women.' A gender-equal enterprise would be one where work and family policies and processes are made on the assumption that every worker of childbearing age will be a primary carer for a period of time. It would hold managers accountable for ensuring their people understood and had access to the best policies they could offer in the spirit of assisting the transition to working parenthood. It would deliver these policies in ways that were consistent, measured, and beyond the murky realms of subjective judgement and unconscious bias. Finally, it would ensure that taking such leave or adjusting work patterns to accommodate care would be normative practice for men as well as women, mothers and fathers, from the executive CEO level suite to the mailroom. Finally, it would ensure this transition was (as far as practical) without negative consequence or penalty in recognition, reward, pay, or promotion.

Though such an organisation does not yet exist, it is possible, and importantly, represents an emerging expectation from fathers as well as mothers that could on the weight of numbers alone reach a groundswell. The recommendations and suggestions below seek to begin this transformation for employers.

Seed Change Early in the Transition to Working Parenthood

- ✓ **Actively promote and plan shared care as an option for all parents before their transition to parenthood.**

As the data has suggested, policy change is the first and necessary step to altering existing patterns of primary care. The provision of well-compensated PPL especially for fathers is essential. In addition, both business and our government agencies should undertake a holistic audit of policies and processes. This should include the creation of a policy and benefits pathway that makes 'shared care' a viable consideration for couples and in time, normative practice. This review should include evaluation of messaging and communications as well as the development of gender-specific return-to-work and prenatal programs.

Alter the Way the Business Prioritises Gender Equality

- ✓ **Shift the gender diversity portfolio to a gender equality unit and place in a more strategic position in the corporate structure. This will create a whole-of-enterprise address of gender equality both internally (employees) and externally (provision of products and services).**

Whilst most organisations now claim 'gender diversity' as a high priority, it is an enterprise division rarely found in the executive, strategic, or compliance operations of organisations. In most organisational structures, gender equality remains an 'after the fact' remedial activity rather than a proactive endeavour that is part of the organisation's DNA. There are three main reasons why gender requires an elevated position outside the diversity portfolio in organisational hierarchies

Firstly, gender as a driver of disadvantage operates differently to other diversity issues. Whilst women may be marginalised in the workplace, they are hardly a marginal employee group. Gender is a visceral, organising principle of human behaviour and works in ways that are more complex than other diversity concerns such as race, for example (Rutherford 2011, p. 3). Gender equality, much like social sustainability, requires visibility in the organisational hierarchy and a detailed and tailored strategy that addresses these unique features. This difference is the reason we have specialty gender offices in many public domains (e.g. the Office of Women).

Secondly, the business case for gender diversity is already well established (Gornick & Meyers 2005; Russell & O'Leary 2012) and thus it needs to become an imperative of any enterprise looking not only for commercial success but importantly innovation. This makes gender diversity relevant for business and for government. The elevation of gender diversity in the machinery of business of government not only sends a strong signal that it is a high priority, it will reduce the need for resolving gendered outcomes, barriers, and obstacles 'after the fact' or as unintended outcomes of policy.

Finally, there is little doubt that having the endorsement and leadership of the highest executive in any enterprise elevates the level of importance a given issue gathers. However, there is a corollary risk of overreliance on the CEO or in government, the head of state, as the principle agent of

change. The average tenure of CEOs in Australia is less than six years. In the last decade we have witnessed leadership in government change almost as rapidly. This is simply not enough time to complete the mainstream transformations needed for a gender equality outcome to be brought to fruition using gender mainstreaming tools (Rees 2005). There is also no guarantee the new incumbents will feel similarly about gender equality and this alone represent a significant risk to the delivery of gender equality that relies on one person as a figure head. Instead, change needs to be embedded in the strategic planning and policy mechanisms of the organisation as a specific outcome and concern.

Implement Consistency and Audit Processes

- ✓ **Develop processes that provide a policy-driven and consistent experience for working parents. This includes ensuring compliance with access and approval for family-friendly work practices/flexibility and care-based leave policies.**

With the continued absence of a positive right to workplace flexibility, internal compliance procedures that align with the intent of family-friendly policy is all but essential. Anything less than scrutiny and measurement may propagate bias (conscious or otherwise). Introducing a compliance mechanism is the most immediate and effective short-term strategy organisations can adopt in progressing gender equality. This will entail the implementation of measurement and compliance processes for applications and approvals. This will help eliminate variability of experiences even within the same organisation and keep any associated employer value propositions intact.

The old adage ‘what gets measured gets noticed’ rings true in most enterprise efforts. These mechanisms can effectively serve as both a data-gathering and compliance process. This will raise levels of visibility, transparency, and accountability for work and family support and gender equality as an outcome. A major drawback of the discretionary nature of existing policy regimes is that the onus remains on the employee to raise a concern. Leaving flexibility open to approval by managers is perhaps particularly precarious for primary breadwinners who, by the nature of their earning responsibility in the family, are more likely to look to increase work responsibility and remuneration, or at least avoid being sidelined for pay and promotion. Thus, it is reasonable to suggest they are

less likely to ask for any status reducing concessions and if they do and are rejected, are less likely to raise a complaint.

Government and Statutory Agencies

Review PPL Policy

The data arising from this study suggests that the architecture of the current statutory PPL scheme is unlikely to reach its third policy aim: to support a more equal sharing of care amongst parents (Martin et al. 2012). It is far from an equality enabling policy.

None of the reforms posed since the PPL scheme's inception have looked to increase fathers' access to and take up of the leave. The previous Abbott Coalition Government perhaps came closest by suggesting the rates of pay be replacement rates. They also proposed changes to the existing scheme that included provision of a longer duration of leave (from 18 to 26 weeks) and superannuation attachments. At the time of writing these extensions have since been withdrawn with the change of leadership to Malcom Turnbull which has focussed on formal childcare as a way of assisting mothers to return to work. It is important to note in the context of the study outcomes that neither the existing PPL scheme nor the Abbott Coalition Government proposals addressed the unique barriers for men in taking up a greater level of primary care of preschool children. Having the leave continue to default to the mother without a 'ring-fenced' component for fathers as a primary caregiver and failing to give fathers replacement rates of pay reinforces the notion it is mothers who should, would, and will leave work to care for the children. In the majority of two-parent, working families, non-replacement rates of pay reconcile to a financial loss for most families given women's lower average earnings even for comparable jobs. Thus, not only does the architecture of the current and proposed policy reflect a maternal model of primary care, through the compensation structures alone, they actively impose it. It is the very model of PPL that fathers in the study reported would make them less likely to take up the leave to be the primary carer.

The Dad and Partner Pay (DaPP) provisions in the existing government scheme present as even more problematic. With no provision for primary care but a positive and heavily promoted provision for concurrent leave allowances, the notion of fathers as a secondary carer is all but reinforced and

enshrined at the policy level. Both primary and secondary care provisions need to be considered and supported in our social policy regimes. To do one at the exclusion of the other however undermines any claims to gender equality because it fails to legitimise fathers as primary caregivers and assumes their position as the primary breadwinner.

PPL for fathers must also be viewed in light of reforms proposed by the former Abbott Coalition Government as part of the 2015-16 budget.

Whilst the motive of changes in the new 'families package' proposed by the then Abbott-led government is to encourage women back to work by opening up an alternative source of care (nanny care or formal childcare for example), the data from the study suggest that providing more formal childcare options will not necessarily meet the needs of working families with very young children. Fathers in this study for example, echoed sentiments found in research elsewhere, in that formal childcare is not the ideal scenario for couples when children are very young (and most particularly less than 12 months of age) and parental care remains the preference. The majority of fathers (and surveyed mothers) reported they would choose to withdraw from the workforce to care for their child rather than place them in formal childcare when less than 12 months of age. The proportion of fathers who reported this preference dropped considerably when children were older than 12 months of age and suggested it is in the first 12 months that parental care is most important to both parents. In addition, the study found primary care arrangements tended to stay the same for the sample over the preschool years. There was some evidence of small changes to mean hours of primary care for mothers and a corresponding increase in hours of formal childcare but only when children were over 12 months of age. However, from birth to six months and from 6-12 months hours of primary care by the mother remained virtually the same. As one respondent had suggested, the first six months of care may be 'habit forming' for parents.

These outcomes have important implications for the gendered distribution of work and care amongst couples and the either/or approach to PPL and childcare policy that appears to have developed in the Australian social policy landscape. Both parents appear to prefer parental care in the first 12 months. Therefore, mothers may be more comfortable returning to work if young children are being cared for by their partner when they do so. This means providing PPL for fathers as a

primary carer could be an important lever in supporting maternal workforce participation that cannot necessarily be engendered with increases to formal childcare opportunities.

Promote Paternal Caregiving as a Norm

Government and their associated service providers can also assist in breaking down the gendered paradigms of work and care by re-examining supports that sit behind 'family' social and welfare services. This requires a repositioning of birth and care as more than a maternal event and doing so at the very earliest points of transitions to parenthood. Given that early primary care arrangements show a tendency to stay the same once they are entrenched, timing and planning is crucial. Supporting planning to share care from the very beginning of pregnancy could potentially provide more opportunities and scope for increased participation of fathers in primary caregiving instead of breadwinning alone.

Review Antenatal Classes and Other Relevant Parenting Services

Antenatal classes provide a sound opportunity to explore shared care and the promotion of fathers in primary caregiving. This could involve introducing parents to existing industrial entitlements (such as parental leave and flexibility provisions under the NES), and arranging guest speakers who have adopted shared or primary care, or made work adjustments to provide such care. Services could also tap into awareness-raising resources such as the Equilibrium Man Challenge documentaries from the WGEA.

There have already been some positive results from pilot programs that include father-centred education and support for caregiving. The outcomes of these evaluations have further exposed the gendered nature of existing services and a growing appetite for direct involvement of fathers in care (Fletcher, Matthey & Marley 2006).

Review Name and Branding of Maternal and Child Health Centres

Although Maternal and Child Health centres are mandated to provide assistance to 'families' the reality is fathers are not routinely included in the processes or screening procedures currently in

place and there is a strong gender bias inherent in the name and branding of the service. With the rise of post-natal depression in fathers and increasing evidence of its negative effects on children, improving father-specific education, screening and inclusion practices would be beneficial in these settings and begin to break down the notion of fathers as a 'secondary carer or parent' (Fletcher, Matthey & Marley 2006; Haas & Hwang 2008; May & Fletcher 2013).

Review Government Collateral Relating to Families

Many government programs and services relating to parenting might benefit from a gender equality focussed review. Activities should look for opportunities to encourage the exploration of sharing primary care for children and incorporate care planning and functional arrangement of childcare and support beyond the immediate post-birth period. Imagery and narrative are also important to review and style in ways that seed the possibility of shared care arrangements.

These changes could be easily incorporated into the Supporting Working Parents website launched as a joint initiative of government and the Australian Human Rights Commission. The site provides quality opportunities to move the gender-equality agenda forward by incorporating the notion of shared caregiving in the messaging. A portal especially for fathers in both the employee and employer sections of the site would be particularly valuable. This might incorporate some of the insights arising from this study and its suggested strategies and international practices for employers to consider.

It is vital that a resource such as the Supporting Working Parents website maximises opportunities to disrupt gendered divisions of work and care, and in doing so, differentiates itself from the number of similar sites that also house information on pregnancy, and return-to-work entitlements or obligations. These include the WGEA, FWA, Department of Social Services, state-based Equal Employment Opportunity bodies and various other union and industrial relations sites which cover similar topics and issues. Whilst the Supporting Working Parents site is the most comprehensive and up-to-date site available in Australia and is supported by comprehensive prevalence data gathered by the AHRC, the site could run the risk of becoming another pin-board for information rather than the tool for change it has the potential to be. Moving beyond outlining rights and

obligations, and promoting a re-engineering of work and caregiving between parents as an ideal and in practice is the central opportunity provided by the development of this site and a worthwhile pursuit.

Limitations and Future Research

Whilst the current study has unearthed a range of important findings the research is not without its limitations.

Firstly, the sampling for this study, whilst large, was relatively homogenous. It included a high proportion of tertiary-educated, white collar workers on above average salary and within mature enterprises in terms of gender equality policy. Thus, irrespective of the sample size, the generalisability of the findings to working fathers more generally is limited. This was however a deliberate sample frame for the purpose of this study which selected a respondent pool best placed to respond to the exploratory nature of the research questions. Having now established that fathers in this sample found it difficult to enact their desired caregiving arrangements it would be instructive to contrast and compare the findings with fathers from more equal earning relationships. This will indicate the degree that policy and rates of pay influences manifest when equal earning at time of birth is apparent, and how the other influences noted in this study such as partners preferences for returning to work and the workplace climate including attitudes of managers play out in these couples where income differences are negligible.

A further area of potential investigation in future research is a deeper analysis of preferences for care in absolute terms and the degree of stability in these preferences over time and contexts (for example, would women still prefer to be the primary carer for older children if this incurred a financial loss to the family?). It will be interesting and useful to know if women simply attribute their decisions to their ‘preferences,’ but their preferences are really driven by their lesser earning capacity which may have been the case because all were secondary earners at the time of survey. As this study was focussed on fathers, these were not pursued by the present research but would make a positive adjunct to the knowledge gathered in this research study and expand understandings of the relative role earnings play across genders when less typical arrangements ensue.

A final direction that would be useful to pursue is exploration of the research questions across different employment contexts. The sampling frame again was a deliberate strategy specific to this study on the premise that white collar workers from large employers would, at a policy and job design level, be most likely to be able to pursue primary caregiving in unison with paid work. Understanding if the same difficulties identified in the present study apply to other industry and sectors, including typically blue-collar domains, would be most useful for comparison of results and practices with the present sample.

Chapter Summary

Drawing on the experiences of primary-earner fathers in contemporary employment settings, this study finds that both fathers and the workplace are two, largely untapped resources, in progressing gender equality in work and caregiving.

The workplace was found to be a potential site of liberation from gender inequality in work and care, however, it is not reaching its full potential because employment remains predicated on out-dated assumptions of the ideal worker/ ideal carer that has long been associated with broader gender disadvantage. Similarly, fathers in this study reported they were willing to participate in primary caregiving of their children and therefore provide a practical as well as psychological support for shared care arrangements with mothers, yet these options remain at the periphery of practice because of the barriers (both implicit and explicit) that are experienced by those who wish to participate as both an earner and carer.

Fathers (and their partners) have dared to give voice to their desires and their disappointments in navigating what is literally, a ‘once in a lifetime’ transition to working parenthood. It is perhaps time organisations, policy makers, and working parents join to pursue a broader model of work and care and align their practices, policies, and processes with their aspirations and rhetoric. It was not that long ago that fathers were actively discouraged from attending the birth of their babies. Just as hospitals around the world had to reconfigure their conceptualisations of birth and radically adapt practices to accommodate the active participation of fathers in birth, employers and government will do the same. It is imperative that we find ways to actively embrace fathers as carers if gender

equality is to ensue. This requires a complete reconfiguration of the ideal worker and ideal carer and the development of structures that advance and integrate a more holistic view of work, value, and productivity. It requires human endeavours that ebb and flow in varying intensities across the life course. It requires that gender equality in its truest sense becomes a core principle of both governing and enterprise. Without this, gender will remain an integral rather than peripheral determinant of one's life course where women will remain at the fringe of work and enterprise and men as observers on the edge of their family life – locked out from the very levers that might foster equality and justice for both men and women, boys and girls.

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Legislation

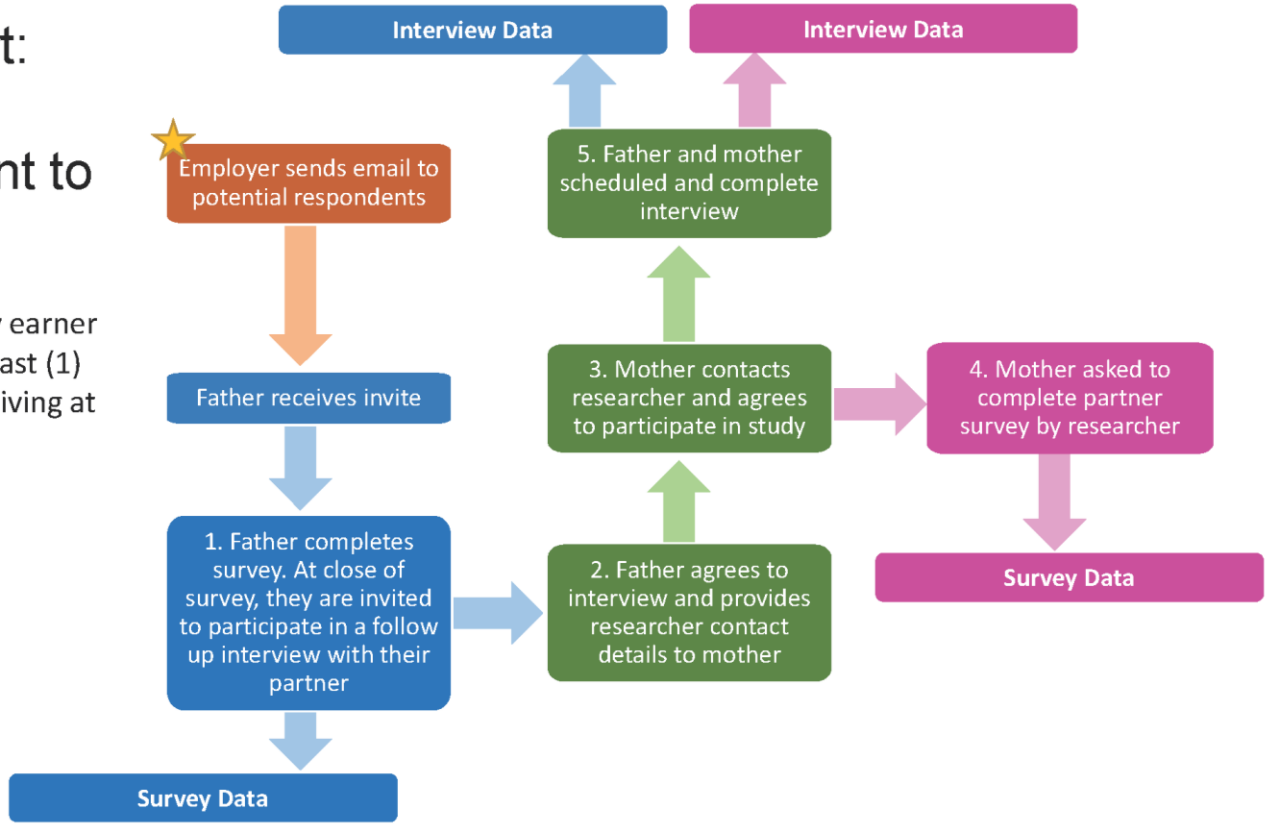
Fair Work Act (2009)

Fair Work Amendment Act (2012)

Appendix 1: Flow Chart of Recruitment Process

Flow chart: Sample recruitment to response

[Target = primary earner fathers with at least (1) pre-school child living at home]



Appendix 2: The Survey

Father Care: Barriers and Gateways, Work and Policy for Primary Earner

1. Welcome

My name is Samone McCurdy and I am conducting research into the challenges fathers experience in taking time off from work to care for pre-school children and the role of policy in their work and care decisions.
This survey is a component of a wider study and will be included as part of my Doctoral Thesis (PhD) at Monash University.

YOU ARE ELIGIBLE TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY IF YOU MEET THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA

Are a father, employed by [organisation] under their HR Policies and Practices (i.e not a third party contractor)
Are the primary breadwinner in your household (i.e earns the most money)
Are part of an intact couple (married or de facto) living in the same home with at least one (1) child who has not yet started primary school (up to age 6)

Father Care: Barriers and Gateways, Work and Policy for Primary Earner

***1. On the next page is further information on this study, how you can participate and how we will use the information you provide.**

Please indicate what you would like to do

- ◯ I meet the survey criteria and would like to participate in the study and / or find out more about it
- ◯ I do not meet all of the above criteria but would like to contribute to the study
- ◯ I want to exit the survey

Father Care: Barriers and Gateways, Work and Policy for Primary Earner

2. EXPLANATORY STATEMENT: Please read before making a decision to participate

This study explores the role of fathers in providing care to their children and the supports and challenges they may experience in taking leave from work to do so. As a working dad you may have a unique insight into these issues and in particular what supports or inhibits decisions to step away from paid work to care for children during the pre-school years.

WHAT CAN I EXPECT FROM PARTICIPATION?
The survey will take approximately 30-40 minutes to complete. Not all questions will be applicable to all respondents

You will be invited to answer questions on your hours of work, family size and experiences and opinion regarding responsibility for family finances and taking leave from paid employment. You will be asked to respond to questions on Paid and Unpaid Parental Leave, Paternity Leave, Carer's Leave, flexible work provisions, part- time work and other leave policies. In some cases you will be asked these questions in relation to your partner.

OUR COMMITMENT TO YOUR PRIVACY

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary; you are under no obligation to participate.

This survey component is completely anonymous – there is no way to trace your responses unless you choose to provide your contact details at the end of the survey.These will remain completely confidential and only the researcher will be privy to those details.

You may withdraw from the study at any time. As this is an anonymous survey however, after you have entered the survey and hit the 'next' button on each survey page you are unable to withdraw those responses as we have no way of knowing which responses are yours.

Your employer has expressed interest and support of this project. They have agreed to offer their employees the opportunity to participate. This survey however is an independent Monash University project.

Your employer has requested a copy of the results from this survey and the wider study. All reports provided to your employer will be provided and presented at a group level in aggregate form. They will have no way of knowing whether or not you chose to participate. They will not be privy to any individual responses, nor will the analysis be conducted or reported in ways where individuals could reasonably be be identified.

THE DATA

Reports and research papers relating to this study may be submitted for publication.

At no time will participants be individually identified.

Only the researcher and University supervisors will have access to the raw data. This will be stored in the Department of Social Work for five years in a locked filing cabinet. Any electronic copies related to the data will be kept on a password locked computer known only to the researchers.

The researcher may choose to share data from this survey with other researchers when the final thesis is completed and in doing so, will abide by the above commitments to confidentiality and anonymity.

If you would like to be informed of the aggregate research findings of this study, please contact
Samone McCurdy - samone.mccurdy@monash.edu. You do not have to take part in the study to receive the results summary.

Father Care: Barriers and Gateways, Work and Policy for Primary Earner

3. YOUR COMFORT AND WELFARE

It is not anticipated that completing the survey will cause any distress to respondents. In the event that distress or issues arise for you as a result of your participation, some support services are noted below.

Lifeline Counselling - on [redacted]
Mensline Australia - [redacted]
Parentline Counselling – [redacted]

You could also talk to your workplace Human Resources Officer or Employee Assistance Provider who may be able to help you or direct you to the most relevant source of support in your circumstances.

If you would like to contact the researchers about any aspect of this study, please contact the Chief Investigator:

Professor Margaret Alston - Head of Department , Professor of Social Work
[redacted]

If you have a complaint concerning the manner in which research project CF12/2261 - 2012001208
is being conducted, please contact our Executive Officer- Monash University Human Research Ethics Committee (MUHREC),

Building 3e Room 111
Research Office
Monash University VIC 3800

[redacted]

TO START THE SURVEY

If you wish to participate in this survey, you must agree you have read and understood the above information and agree to participate under these terms and conditions. Doing so is considered your consent.

Thank you for your input and interest in this project.

Warm regards,
Samone McCurdy

BA (Honours), BSW (Honours)
PhD Candidate- Monash University (Melbourne)

***1. Have you read and understood the information regarding participation in this study?**

- ◯ YES - I have read and understood the information regarding my participation in this study
- ◯ NO- I have not read and understood the information regarding my participation

Father Care: Barriers and Gateways, Work and Policy for Primary Earner

4. SURVEY START** This section asks about yourself and your work and family s...

**This survey will ask you to nominate numbers for some questions (e.g. hours or work, number of weeks leave etc). Please use WHOLE NUMBERS ONLY, rounding up to the nearest whole number where applicable.

***1. What is your age?**

- ◯ 18-24
- ◯ 25-30
- ◯ 31-34
- ◯ 35-40
- ◯ 41-45
- ◯ 46-50
- ◯ 51-55
- ◯ 56-60
- ◯ 61 and over

2. In which state do you live?

- ◯ VIC
- ◯ NSW
- ◯ QLD
- ◯ SA
- ◯ WA
- ◯ TAS
- ◯ NT
- ◯ ACT

3. What category BEST describes your current geographic setting?

- ◯ Metropolitan Capital City
- ◯ Urban (population more than 100,000)
- ◯ Rural (population between 5,000 and 99,999)
- ◯ Remote (population less than 5,000)

Father Care: Barriers and Gateways, Work and Policy for Primary Earner

4. What is the main language spoken at home?

- ◯ English
- ◯ Italian
- ◯ Greek
- ◯ Cantonese
- ◯ Mandarin
- ◯ Arabic

Other (please specify)

5. Do you identify as being of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

***6. Which category BEST describes your highest level of educational attainment?**

- ◯ High School
- ◯ High School Diploma (Year 12 / VCE, HSC equivalent etc)
- ◯ TAFE Certificate/ Diploma or equivalent
- ◯ Bachelor Degree
- ◯ Post Graduate Degree (eg Honours/ Masters)
- ◯ PhD

***7. Have you at any time in your working life been the primary carer (stay at home dad) to any dependent children in your family ?**

IN THIS SURVEY PRIMARY CARER IS DEFINED AS THE CARER WHO IS MORE OFTEN THAN NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR MEETING THE CHILD'S PHYSICAL CARE NEEDS DURING THE WORKING WEEK

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

Father Care: Barriers and Gateways, Work and Policy for Primary Earner

5. Paid Work/ Employment

This section asks you about your current employment situation.

***1. Which category BEST describes your current employment status ?**

- ◯ Full-Time
- ◯ Part-Time

***2. Which category BEST describes the nature of your engagement ?**

- ◯ Permanent Employee
- ◯ Casual Employee
- ◯ Fixed Term Contract Employee

***3. From the following list, which category BEST describes the nature of your current job role?**

These options are based on categories from the CENSUS and will be used to check our sample distribution. You may feel your job role fits more than one of these categories. Please select the one that most closely describes your role based on the work you do more than 50% of the time in your CURRENT job.

- ◯ Manager
- ◯ Professional
- ◯ Technician and Trades
- ◯ Community and Personal Service
- ◯ Clerical or Administrative
- ◯ Sales
- ◯ Machinery Operator and Driver
- ◯ Labourer

Father Care: Barriers and Gateways, Work and Policy for Primary Earner

4. From the following list please select the job role that BEST describes your current company role

- ◯ Partner/ Executive Director
- ◯ Director
- ◯ Associate Director
- ◯ Senior Manager
- ◯ Manager
- ◯ Senior Team Member/ Senior Consultant
- ◯ Team Member/Consultant
- ◯ Undergraduate
- ◯ Vacationer

5. On average how many hours per week do you work in this job (including overtime)?

[ ]

***6. What category BEST describes your typical hours of work?**

- ◯ Standard Working Hours (Mon- Friday)
- ◯ Non Standard Hours (including weekend shifts)
- ◯ Shift Work (regular shift)
- ◯ Shift Work (rotating shifts)
- ◯ Other (please specify)

[ ]

***7. What category BEST describes your current gross yearly salary range for this job ?**

- ◯ Less than $15,000 per year
- ◯ $15,000 up to $24,999
- ◯ $25,000 up to $34,999
- ◯ $35,000 up to $44,999
- ◯ $45,000 up to $54,999
- ◯ $55,000 up to $74,999
- ◯ $75,000 up to $99,999
- ◯ $100,000 up to $149,000
- ◯ $150,000 up to $199,999
- ◯ $200,000 and over

Father Care: Barriers and Gateways, Work and Policy for Primary Earner

6. Your Family

This next section asks you about your family size and structure including your partner and your children.

***1. How many children do you currently have living at home with you ?**

- ◯ 1
- ◯ 2
- ◯ 3
- ◯ 4
- ◯ 5
- ◯ 6
- ◯ 7 or more

Father Care: Barriers and Gateways, Work and Policy for Primary Earner

7. Number of pre-school children living at home

***1. Of the children living at home with you, how many children are not yet attending full-time primary school*?**

(* Those not attending full-time primary school are referred to from this point in the survey as 'pre-school' children)

- ◯ 1
- ◯ 2
- ◯ 3
- ◯ 4
- ◯ 5
- ◯ 6
- ◯ 7 or more

Father Care: Barriers and Gateways, Work and Policy for Primary Earner

8. Age (One Child)

***1. What is the age of this child ?**

- ◯ Less than 6 months old
- ◯ 6 -12 months old
- ◯ Between 1 & 2 years of age
- ◯ Between 2 & 3 years of age
- ◯ Between 3 & 4 years of age
- ◯ Between 4 & 5 years of age
- ◯ Between 5 & 6 years of age

Father Care: Barriers and Gateways, Work and Policy for Primary Earner

9. Age of Children

***1. What age is your youngest pre-school child living at home ?**

- ◯ Less than 6 months old
- ◯ Between 6 & 12 months old
- ◯ Between 1 & 2 years of age
- ◯ Between 2 & 3 years of age
- ◯ Between 3 & 4 years of age
- ◯ Between 4 & 5 years of age
- ◯ Between 5 & 6 years of age

2. What is the age of the eldest pre-school child living at home?

- ◯ Less than 6 months old
- ◯ Between 6 & 12 months old
- ◯ Between 1 & 2 years of age
- ◯ Between 2 & 3 years of age
- ◯ Between 3 & 4 years of age
- ◯ Between 4 & 5 years of age
- ◯ Between 5 & 6 years of age

Father Care: Barriers and Gateways, Work and Policy for Primary Earner

10. Your Partnership

This section asks you about your partner and your partnership status.

***1. Your partner is.....**

- ◯ Male
- ◯ Female

2. From the following, which category BEST describes your partnership status?

- ◯ Married
- ◯ De-facto/ living together

***3. Please indicate your partner's age?**

- ◯ 18-24
- ◯ 25-30
- ◯ 31-34
- ◯ 35-40
- ◯ 41-45
- ◯ 46-50
- ◯ 51-55
- ◯ 56-60
- ◯ Over 65

***4. Which category BEST describes your partner's highest level of education attainment?**

- ◯ High School
- ◯ High School Diploma (Year 12 / VCE, HSC equivalent etc)
- ◯ TAFE Certificate/ Diploma or equivalent
- ◯ Bachelor Degree
- ◯ Post Graduate Degree (eg Honours/ Masters)
- ◯ PhD

5. Which category BEST describes your partner's current caring status for pre-school children in your home?

- ◯ Primary Carer
- ◯ Joint Carer

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***6. Which category BEST describes your partner's current earner status compared to you?**

- ◯ Primary Earner
- ◯ Secondary Earner
- ◯ Equal Earner
- ◯ Not currently in paid employment

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11. Reason for not working

1. What reason best describes why your partner is not in paid work at this time ?

- ◯ Retrenchment/ redundancy
- ◯ Terminated
- ◯ End of contract
- ◯ Illness or Injury
- ◯ Studying
- ◯ Caring for children
- ◯ Unable to find suitable work
- ◯ Not required or interested in working at this time

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12. Partner Employment

***1. Which category BEST describes your partner's current employment status ?**

- ◯ Full- Time
- ◯ Part-Time

***2. On average how many hours per week does your partner currently work in paid employment?**

Hours per week

***3. Which category BEST describes the nature of your partner's engagement?**

- ◯ Permanent Employee
- ◯ Casual Employee
- ◯ Fixed Term Contract Employee
- ◯ Third Party Contractor
- ◯ Self Employed
- ◯ Other (please specify)

***4. What is the nature of your partner's typical hours of work?**

- ◯ Standard Working Hours (Mon- Friday)
- ◯ Non Standard Hours (including weekend shifts)
- ◯ Shift Work (regular shift)
- ◯ Shift Work (rotating shifts)
- ◯ Other (please specify)

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13. Employment - Prior to birth

This section asks you about both you and your partner's work situation and employment conditions just prior to birth.

If you currently have more than one pre-school child living at home, please reflect on the questions in relation to your YOUNGEST pre- school child.

***1. Just prior to/ at time of birth, what category best describes your work status?**

- ◯ Full-time
- ◯ Part-time
- ◯ Not in paid employment

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14. Pre- birth Employment Details

***1. Which category BEST describes the nature of your engagement in this pre birth period ?**

- ◯ Permanent Employee
- ◯ Casual Employee
- ◯ Fixed Term Contract Employee

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15. Not in Paid Employment

1. What reason best describes why you were not in paid employment at the time?

- ◯ Retrenchment/ redundancy
- ◯ Terminated
- ◯ End of contract
- ◯ Illness or Injury
- ◯ Studying
- ◯ Caring for children
- ◯ Unable to find suitable work
- ◯ Not required / interested in paid work

Other (please specify)

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16. Partner's Employment Situation

***1. Just prior to/ at time of birth of this same child, what was your PARTNER'S paid employment situation?**

- ◯ Full-time
- ◯ Part -time
- ◯ Not in paid employment

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17. Partner Pre- birth Employment Details

***1. Which category BEST describes the nature of your PARTNER'S engagement at this time ?**

- ◯ Permanent Employee
- ◯ Casual Employee
- ◯ Fixed Term Contract Employee
- ◯ Third Party Contractor
- ◯ Self Employed
- ◯ Not in paid employment
- ◯ Other (please specify)

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18. Reason for partner not in paid work

1. What reason best describes why your partner was not in paid work at this time ?

- ◯ Retrenchment/ redundancy
- ◯ Terminated
- ◯ End of contract
- ◯ Illness or Injury
- ◯ Studying
- ◯ Caring for children
- ◯ Unable to find suitable work
- ◯ Not required or interested in working at this time

Other (please specify)

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19. Care Arrangements When You Are at Work (0-6 months)

This next section asks you about the care arrangements utilised in your family for your YOUNGEST or only pre-school child when they were between 0-6 months of age.

For some respondents, this time period may have been several years ago. Please provide the responses that best fit with your recollection at that time.

For the purposes of this survey the 'Primary Carer' is considered the PARENT who is/ was more often than not responsible for meeting the child's physical care needs during the working week.

***1. Between birth and 6 months of age, what category best describes the MAIN care arrangement for your youngest pre-school child during your family's normal working week?**

- ◯ Father as primary carer (provides most care)
- ◯ Mother as primary carer (provides most care)
- ◯ Equal sharing of care between mother and father
- ◯ Care from other family members/ extended family/ friends
- ◯ Centre based childcare /or family day care
- ◯ Other (please specify)

***2. Please indicate the allocation of care for this child at 0-6 months of age.**

This question asks you to allocate caring hours in relation to YOUR paid employment hours . For example if you spent 50 hours a week in paid work, 50 hours of care should be allocated below.

Indicate hours for each category of care.
Please use whole numbers with no decimal places, rounding up where applicable. Mark as 0 for any category that does not apply

Hours per week in paid employment	
Hours per week this child spent in formal child care	
Hours per week this child spend in the care of family/ friends	
Hours per week this child spent in exclusive care of your partner	
Hours per week this child spent in YOUR exclusive care	

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***3. What was your work status at this time?**

- ◯ Permanent Employee
- ◯ Casual Employee
- ◯ Fixed Term Contract Employee
- ◯ Third Party Contractor
- ◯ Self Employed

***4. What was the nature of your typical hours of work at this time?**

- ◯ Standard Working Hours (Mon- Friday)
- ◯ Non Standard Hours (including weekend shifts)
- ◯ Shift Work (regular shift)
- ◯ Shift Work (rotating shifts)
- ◯ Other (please specify)

***5. Was your PARTNER also working at this time?**

- ◯ No - not in the paid workforce
- ◯ No - on leave from workplace
- ◯ Yes

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20. Partner Work Details (0-6 months)

***1. How many hours per week was your partner in paid employment during this time?**

Hours per week

***2. What was the nature of your partner's typical hours of work at this time?**

- ◯ Standard Working Hours (Mon- Friday)
- ◯ Non Standard Hours (including weekend shifts)
- ◯ Shift Work (regular shift)
- ◯ Shift Work (rotating shifts)
- ◯ Other (please specify)

***3. What was your partner's work status at this time?**

- ◯ Permanent Employee
- ◯ Casual Employee
- ◯ Fixed Term Contract Employee
- ◯ Third Party Contractor
- ◯ Self Employed
- ◯ Other (please specify)

Father Care: Barriers and Gateways, Work and Policy for Primary Earner

21. Influences on Care Planning

This section asks you about the things that influenced you when planning the care arrangements for this child

***1. In making care decisions for this child up to 6 months of age, how influential were the following factors for YOU in determining who would take on the primary caring role?**

	1 - Not at all Influential	2 - Minimally Influential	3 - Somewhat Influential	4 - Highly Influential
Your preferences for the care of this child	○	○	○	○
Breastfeeding Considerations	○	○	○	○
Career Aspirations/ Goals	○	○	○	○
Availability / Eligibility of Leave and Workplace Flexibility	○	○	○	○
Work / Employment/ Business Imperatives	○	○	○	○
Partner's preferences for the care of this child	○	○	○	○
Health of the Mother	○	○	○	○
Health of the Baby	○	○	○	○
Redundancy/ Unemployment	○	○	○	○
Expectations of others (eg.workplace, family, society)	○	○	○	○
Financial Viability	○	○	○	○
Convenience (one partner already caring for others)	○	○	○	○

***2. From the list below, what do you believe was the STRONGEST influence on YOU in deciding who would take on the primary caring role for this child up to 6 months of age?**

- ○ Breastfeeding Considerations
- ○ Career Aspirations
- ○ Redundancy/ Unemployment
- ○ Work / Employment/ Business Imperatives
- ○ Your preferences for the care of the child
- ○ Health of the Mother
- ○ Convenience (one partner already caring for others)
- ○ Availability / Eligibility of Leave
- ○ Financial Viability
- ○ Health of the baby
- ○ Partner's preferences for the care of the child

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***3. From the list below, what do you believe was the STRONGEST influence on YOUR PARTNER when planning the care for this child from birth to 6 months of age?**

- ◯ Breastfeeding Considerations
- ◯ Your preferences for the care of the child
- ◯ Health needs of the baby
- ◯ Career Aspirations
- ◯ Their Health
- ◯ Their preferences for the care of the child
- ◯ Financial Viability
- ◯ Redundancy/ Unemployment
- ◯ Work / Employment/ Business Imperatives
- ◯ Convenience (one partner already caring for others)
- ◯ Availability / Eligibility of Leave

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22. Work and Care Arrangements 6-12 months

This section asks similar questions to the previous section for the same child but in relation to the arrangements made when that child was (6-12 months) of age.

***1. Is your youngest pre-school child (living at home with you and your partner) older than six months of age?**

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

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23. Care Arrangements When You Are at Work (6-12 Months)

***1. What category BEST describes the major care arrangement for this child between 6-12 months of age, during your family's normal working week?**

- ◯ Father as primary carer
- ◯ Mother as primary carer
- ◯ Equal sharing of care between mother and father
- ◯ Care from other family members/ extended family/ friends
- ◯ Centre Based Care or Family Day Care
- ◯ Other (please specify)

***2. Please indicate the allocation of care for this child at 6-12 months of age.**

This question asks you to allocate caring hours in relation to YOUR paid employment hours . For example if you spent 50 hours a week in paid work , 50 hours of care should be allocated below.

Indicate hours for each category of care. Mark as 0 for any category that does not apply

Hours per week in paid employment	
Hours per week this child spent in formal child care	
Hours per week this child spend in the care of family/ friends	
Hours per week this child spent in exclusive care of partner	
Hours per week this child spent in YOUR exclusive care	

***3. Were you with your current employer at this time?**

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

***4. What was the nature of your typical hours of work at this time?**

- ◯ Standard Working Hours (Mon- Friday)
- ◯ Non Standard Hours (including weekend shifts)
- ◯ Shift Work (regular shift)
- ◯ Shift Work (rotating shifts)
- ◯ Other (please specify)

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***5. Was your PARTNER also working at this time?**

- ◯ No - not in the paid workforce
- ◯ No - on leave from workplace
- ◯ Yes

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24. Partner Work Details - 6/12 months

***1. How many hours per week was your partner in paid employment during this time?**

If your partner was not in paid employment mark as 0

Hours per week

***2. What was the nature of your partner's typical hours of work at this time?**

- ◯ Standard Working Hours (Mon- Friday)
- ◯ Non Standard Hours (including weekend shifts)
- ◯ Shift Work (regular shift)
- ◯ Shift Work (rotating shifts)
- ◯ Other (please specify)

Father Care: Barriers and Gateways, Work and Policy for Primary Earner

25. Influences on Care Planning (6-12 months)

This section asks you about the things that influenced you when planning the care arrangements for this child

***1. In making care decisions for this child when they were 6-12 months of age, how influential were the following factors for YOU in determining who would take on the primary caring role?**

	1 - Not at all Influential	2 - Minimally Influential	3 - Somewhat Influential	4 - Highly Influential
Your preferences for the care of this child	○	○	○	○
Work / Employment/ Business Imperatives	○	○	○	○
Career Aspirations/ Goals	○	○	○	○
Breastfeeding Considerations	○	○	○	○
Health of the baby	○	○	○	○
Expectations of others (eg.workplace, family, society)	○	○	○	○
Health of the Mother	○	○	○	○
Availability / Eligibility of Leave and Workplace Flexibility	○	○	○	○
Convenience (one partner already caring for others)	○	○	○	○
Redundancy/ Unemployment	○	○	○	○
Partner's preferences for the care of this child	○	○	○	○
Financial Viability	○	○	○	○

***2. From the list below, what do you believe was the STRONGEST influence on YOU in deciding who would take on the primary caring role for this child between 6-12 months of age?**

- ○ Your preferences for the care of the child
- ○ Health of the baby
- ○ Financial Viability
- ○ Breastfeeding Considerations
- ○ Redundancy/ Unemployment
- ○ Convenience (one partner already caring for others)
- ○ Partner's preferences for the care of the child
- ○ Availability / Eligibility of Leave
- ○ Work / Employment/ Business Imperatives
- ○ Career Aspirations
- ○ Health of the Mother

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***3. From the list below, what do you believe was the STRONGEST influence on YOUR PARTNER when planning the care for this child between 6-12 months of age?**

- ◯ Breastfeeding Considerations
- ◯ Their Health
- ◯ Availability / Eligibility of Leave
- ◯ Career Aspirations
- ◯ Financial Viability
- ◯ Redundancy/ Unemployment
- ◯ Work / Employment/ Business Imperatives
- ◯ Their preferences for the care of the child
- ◯ Health needs of the baby
- ◯ Your preferences for the care of the child
- ◯ Convenience (one partner already caring for others)

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26. Current Work and Care Arrangements

This section will ask you similar questions to the previous section for the same child but in relation to your CURRENT work and care arrangements

***1. Is this pre- school child older than 12 months of age?**

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

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27. Confirm Details - 6 months and beyond

1. Have any of the work and care arrangements, influences or preferences for care altered for this child for either YOU or YOUR PARTNER from the 6-12 month of age bracket ?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

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28. Current Arrangements- Details

You indicated that some arrangements, preferences or influences have changed since this child's 6-12 month age span. Please indicate what has changed on the following pages.

If an aspect of care or planning etc has remained the same, then you may skip the question by not checking any of the boxes. In this case your responses to the previous age period will be taken as your current situation.

1. What category BEST describes the CURRENT care arrangements for this child during your family's normal working week?

- ◯ Father as primary carer (providing the majority of care)
- ◯ Mother as primary carer (providing the majority of care)
- ◯ Equal sharing of care between mother and father
- ◯ Care from other family members/ extended family/ friends
- ◯ Centre Based Care or Family Day Care

Other (please specify)

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29. Caring Arrangements When You Are at Work

1. How is your child cared for when YOU are at work ?

This question asks you to note the care arrangements in relation to YOUR paid employment hours. For example if you spend 50 hours a week in paid work, 50 hours of care should be allocated below.

Please Indicate a response for each care category. Mark as 0 for any category that does not apply

Hours per week in paid employment	
Hours per week this child spends in formal child care	
Hours per week this child spends in the care of family/ friends	
Hours per week this child spends in exclusive care of your partner	
Hours per week this child spends in YOUR exclusive care	

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30. Influences on Care Planning (Current)

This section asks you about the things that influenced you when planning your current care arrangements for this child

1. When making your current care arrangements for this child, how influential were the following factors for YOU in determining who would take on the primary caring role?

	1 - Not at all Influential	2 - Minimally Influential	3 - Somewhat Influential	4 - Highly Influential
Work / Employment/ Business Imperatives	○	○	○	○
Availability / Eligibility of Leave and Workplace Flexibility	○	○	○	○
Expectations of others (eg.workplace, family, society)	○	○	○	○
Breastfeeding Considerations	○	○	○	○
Your preferences for the care of this child	○	○	○	○
Health of the Mother	○	○	○	○
Partner's preferences for the care of this child	○	○	○	○
Convenience (one partner already caring for others)	○	○	○	○
Redundancy/ Unemployment	○	○	○	○
Financial Viability	○	○	○	○
Career Aspirations/ Goals	○	○	○	○
Health of the Baby	○	○	○	○

2. From the list below, what do you believe was the STRONGEST influence on YOU in deciding who would take on the primary caring role within your current care arrangments?

- ○ Work / Employment/ Business Imperatives
- ○ Breastfeeding Considerations
- ○ Health of the Mother
- ○ Partner's preferences for the care of the child
- ○ Your preferences for the care of the child
- ○ Financial Viability
- ○ Health of the Baby
- ○ Availability / Eligibility of Leave
- ○ Redundancy/ Unemployment
- ○ Career Aspirations
- ○ Convenience (one partner already caring for others)

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3. From the list below, what do you believe was the STRONGEST influence on YOUR PARTNER when planning the current care arrangements for this child?

- ◯ Availability / Eligibility of Leave
- ◯ Their preferences for the care of the child
- ◯ Breastfeeding Considerations
- ◯ Work / Employment/ Business Imperatives
- ◯ Their Health
- ◯ Health needs of the Baby
- ◯ Financial Viability
- ◯ Convenience (one partner already caring for others)
- ◯ Redundancy/ Unemployment
- ◯ Career Aspirations
- ◯ Your preferences for the care of the child

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31. Work and Care Planning

1. Thinking about the work and care arrangements for this child, did the allocation of child care and paid work go according to the plans you and your partner made ?

Please note a response for all age ranges that are applicable to your youngest preschool child.

	Yes	No
0-6 months	◯	◯
7-12 months	◯	◯
Current	◯	◯

2. If no, please explain what changed and why?

0-6 months	
7-12 months	
Current	

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32. Satisfaction with Care Arrangements

***1. Please rate your level of satisfaction with the PRIMARY CARER arrangements in place for this child over the pre-school years.**

	Not at all Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Extremely Satisfied
From 0-6 months of age	○	○	○	○	○
6-12 months of age	○	○	○	○	○
Current arrangement	○	○	○	○	○

2. Was there anything you would change about the primary carer arrangements for this child at the given period of time

0-6 months of age	
7- 12 months of age	
Your current arrangements	

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33. Post Birth Leave Arrangements

This section asks you about YOUR leave arrangements in relation to the birth and care of this same child.

1. Did you take ANY type of leave from work at or around the time of birth of your youngest pre-school child?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

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34. Purpose of the Leave

***1. Was this leave for you to be the PRIMARY CARER of this child?**

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

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35. Type of Leave (Primary Care)

You indicated you took leave to PRIMARY CARE for this child . This means you were the sole carer at home for this child.

1. How old was the child when you took this primary carer leave? (in weeks OR months)

Age in weeks

Age in months

***2. What type of leave did you take?**

- [ ] Government Funded / Statutory Paid Parental Leave
- [ ] Paid Maternity Leave (Employer Funded)
- [ ] Unpaid Maternity Leave (or equivalent)
- [ ] Unpaid Parental Leave
- [ ] Paid Parental Leave
- [ ] Paid Adoption Leave
- [ ] Unpaid Adoption Leave
- [ ] None of the above

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36. Duration of Primary Carer Leave

***1. Please indicate the length of time you took Primary Carer based leave (in weeks). If you are still on leave please note "still on leave" .**

Government Funded / Statutory Paid Parental Leave	
Paid Maternity Leave	
Unpaid Maternity Leave	
Unpaid Parental Leave	
Paid Parental Leave	
Paid Adoption Leave	
Unpaid Adoption Leave	

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37. Leave (Non- Primary Care Based Leave)

1. Please indicate whether you took any of the following types of leave at or around the time of birth of this child.

- [ ] Government Funded Paternity Leave (Partner Pay)
- [ ] Paid Paternity Leave (Employer Provided)
- [ ] Unpaid Paternity Leave
- [ ] Sick Leave
- [ ] Annual Leave/ Recreation Leave
- [ ] Long Service Leave
- [ ] Carer's Leave
- [ ] Other Paid or Unpaid Leave (eg career break)
- [ ] I did not take any of these leaves

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38. Duration of Other Leave

***1. How long was the duration of such leave (number of weeks)?**

Paid Paternity Leave	
Unpaid Paternity Leave	
Sick Leave	
Annual Leave/ Recreation Leave	
Long Service Leave	
Carer's Leave	
Other Paid or Unpaid Leave (eg.career break)	

***2. How old was the child when you took this leave? (in weeks OR months)**

Age in weeks	
Age in months	

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39. Reason for Not Taking Any Leave

***1. What reason/s best describes why you did not utilise any leave at this time?**

You may choose more than 1 response

- [ ] Not entitled to any leave (contractor/ self employed)
- [ ] Not entitled to any leave (not at employer long enough/ meet work requirements)
- [ ] Did not have enough leave saved up with employer
- [ ] Did not have access to any care specific leave at my workplace
- [ ] I was not sure if I was entitled to take any leave for birth/ care
- [ ] I was not able to take time off due to work commitments/ job pressures
- [ ] I did not wish to take time off work
- [ ] I did not think it was required/ necessary to take leave at this time
- [ ] Other (please specify)

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40. Post Birth Return to Paid Work

1. Did you return to your pre- birth employer after the birth of this child ?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

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41. Reason for NOT returning to employer (post leave)

1. From the following which BEST describes why you did not return to your previous employer?

- [ ] Decided to leave employer and find another position
- [ ] Employer refused part-time return to work
- [ ] Employer was unable to find a suitable position for me
- [ ] Position was made redundant
- [ ] Found a higher paid position
- [ ] Found a job with better work conditions
- [ ] Found a less stressful job
- [ ] Found a less responsible job (step down)
- [ ] Found a more responsible position (step up)
- [ ] Decided to leave the workforce and care full time

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42. Post Birth Job Role Details

1. Did you return to work after the birth of this child doing the same hours ?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No - I returned doing less hours
- ◯ No - I returned doing more hours

***2. Did you return to the same position you held prior to your leave?**

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

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43. Reason for job role change

1. What was the primary reason/s for your role/ position change ?

- [ ] Career progress
- [ ] More money
- [ ] More responsibility
- [ ] Less responsibility
- [ ] Less stressful
- [ ] Less travel
- [ ] More family friendly work conditions
- [ ] Wanted to pursue other interests (study, fitness, leisure etc)

Other (please specify)

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44. Satisfaction with Time Away from Work

***1. Overall, how satisfied are YOU with the amount of time you had away from work for the birth and care of this child?**

	Not at all satisfied	Minimally satisfied	Satisfied	Reasonably satisfied	Highly satisfied
Satisfaction	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

2. From the options below which statement best reflects how you feel about the amount of time you had off from work in regards to this child?

- ◯ I would have liked to have had more time off than I did for this child
- ◯ I would have liked to have had less time off than I did for this child
- ◯ I am happy with amount of time I had off with this child

3. What is the ideal amount of time away from work for YOU to stay at home WITH your partner after birth?

You may answer in number of weeks OR number of months.

Weeks

Months

4. What is the ideal amount of time away from work for YOU to stay at home as the PRIMARY CARER after birth?

You may answer in number of weeks OR number of months.

Weeks

Months

5. What do you feel is the ideal amount of time away from work for YOUR PARTNER to stay at home as the PRIMARY CARER after birth?

You may answer in number of weeks OR number of months.

Weeks

Months

***6. Overall, how satisfied do you think your partner is with the amount of time YOU had away from work at the time of birth and/ or care for this child?**

	Not at all satisfied	Minimally satisfied	Satisfied	Reasonably Satisfied	Highly Satisfied
Satisfaction with duration of leave	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

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45. Ideal Scenarios

The following section of the survey tests a number of proposed changes to the statutory Paid Parental Leave scheme. These changes are thought to encourage a more equal sharing of care amongst parents and a greater take up of the leave by fathers.

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46. Rate of Pay

1. In what way would the rate of pay influence you to take up PAID PARENTAL LEAVE and assume the role of primary carer.

	More likely	Less likely	No Impact
Paid at federal minimum wage for full duration of the leave	○	○	○
Paid at your pre- birth rate of pay for full duration of the leave	○	○	○
Paid at 80% of your pre-birth pay for the duration of the leave	○	○	○
Paid at 2/3 (67%) of your pre-birth rate of pay for full duration of the leave	○	○	○

2. In what way do you believe the given rate of pay would influence YOUR PARTNER to take Paid Parental Leave and assume the role of primary carer?

	More likely	Less likely	No impact
Paid at federal minimum wage for full duration of the leave	○	○	○
Paid at their pre- birth rate of pay employment rate of pay	○	○	○
Paid at 80% of their pre- birth rate of pay	○	○	○
Paid at 2/3 (67%) of their pre- birth rate of pay for full duration of the leave	○	○	○

Father Care: Barriers and Gateways, Work and Policy for Primary Earner

47. Duration of Leave

1. If Paid Parental Leave was paid at your pre birth salary and you were to be the primary carer (leave taker), how long would you be prepared to stay at home as the primary carer before your return to work?

- ◯ 6 weeks or less
- ◯ 12 weeks (3 months)
- ◯ 14 weeks
- ◯ 26 weeks (6 months)
- ◯ 39 weeks (9 months)
- ◯ 52 weeks (1 year)
- ◯ Between 1 and 2 years
- ◯ Between 2 and 3 years years
- ◯ None of the above- I would not take the leave

2. If YOUR PARTNER was to be the primary carer (leave taker) and Paid Parental Leave was paid at their pre- birth salary rate, what do you consider to be the ideal duration of leave before returning to paid employment ?

- ◯ 6 weeks or less
- ◯ 12 weeks (3 months)
- ◯ 14 weeks
- ◯ 26 weeks (6 months)
- ◯ 39 weeks (9 months)
- ◯ 52 weeks (1 year)
- ◯ Between 1 and 2 years
- ◯ Between 2 and 3 years
- ◯ None of the above- they would not take the leave

Father Care: Barriers and Gateways, Work and Policy for Primary Earner

3. If Paid Parental Leave was paid at federal minimum wage and you were to be the primary carer (leave taker), how long would you be prepared to stay at home as the primary carer before returning to paid employment ?

- ◯ 6 weeks or less
- ◯ 12 weeks (3 months)
- ◯ 14 weeks
- ◯ 26 weeks (6 months)
- ◯ 39 weeks (9 months)
- ◯ 52 weeks (1 year)
- ◯ Between 1 and 2 years
- ◯ Between 2 and 3 years
- ◯ None of the above - I would not take the leave

4. If Paid Parental Leave was paid at the federal minimum wage and YOUR PARTNER was to be the primary carer (leave taker), what do you consider to be the ideal duration of leave before returning to paid employment ?

- ◯ 6 weeks or less
- ◯ 12 weeks (3 months)
- ◯ 14 weeks
- ◯ 26 weeks (6 months)
- ◯ 39 weeks (9 months)
- ◯ 52 weeks (1 year)
- ◯ Between 1 and 2 years
- ◯ Between 2 and 3 years
- ◯ None of the above- they would not take the leave

Father Care: Barriers and Gateways, Work and Policy for Primary Earner

48. Necessary and Sufficient Conditions

1. From the following please select the three conditions that must be met before YOU would consider taking Paid Parental Leave and becoming the primary carer for a preschool child ?

You can consider your right to return to your previous job after leave a guaranteed condition .

- [ ] Paid at replacement rates of pay
- [ ] Less than six months leave
- [ ] Ability to use the leave part time
- [ ] No breast feeding issues
- [ ] A leave allocation of your own (separate to the mother)
- [ ] Superannuation payment on leave
- [ ] More than six weeks leave

Father Care: Barriers and Gateways, Work and Policy for Primary Earner

49. Perceptions of Paid Parental Leave

1. Do you think Paid Parental Leave has a significant impact on employees' return to work with the same employer?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

2. Do you think Paid Parental Leave encourages mothers to return to work .....

- ◯ sooner than they would have without the leave
- ◯ later than they would have without the leave
- ◯ has no impact on timing of return

3. If you were the primary carer for a child, do you think Paid Parental Leave would encourage YOU to return to work .....

- ◯ sooner than you would without the leave
- ◯ later than you would without the leave
- ◯ has no impact on timing of return

4. What value do you think Paid Parental Leave provides to working fathers?

Father Care: Barriers and Gateways, Work and Policy for Primary Earner

50. Work / Care Tension

1. If caring for your dependent child and paid work became completely unworkable and you had to choose between full-time child care in your local centre and YOU withdrawing from the workplace to care for them, which would you be more likely to choose ?

	Withdraw from the workforce	Full-time child care
0-12 months of age	◯	◯
1-2 years of age	◯	◯
2-3 years of age	◯	◯
3-4 years of age	◯	◯
4-6 years of age	◯	◯

2. If caring for your dependent child and paid work became completely unworkable and YOUR PARTNER had to choose between full-time child care in your local centre and withdrawing from the workplace to care for them, which would they be more likely to choose ?

	Withdraw from the workforce	Full-time child care
0-12 months of age	◯	◯
1-2 years of age	◯	◯
2-3 years of age	◯	◯
3-4 years of age	◯	◯
4-6 years of age	◯	◯

Father Care: Barriers and Gateways, Work and Policy for Primary Earner

51. Family Friendly Leave - General Utilisation

This section asks you about the leave (other than Paid Parental Leave) you have used for caring purposes for ANY of your children with your current employer.

For some questions you are asked to indicate numbers as part of your response. Please use whole numbers without decimal places.

1. Please indicate from the following list the types of leave you have utilised in your current workplace to attend to the care needs of children living in your home.

You may choose more than one.

- [ ] Carer's Leave
- [ ] 48/52 Leave Purchase Arrangements
- [ ] Lactation/ Feeding Leave
- [ ] Annual Leave/ Recreation Leave
- [ ] Sick Leave
- [ ] Career Break
- [ ] Leave without Pay/ Unpaid Leave
- [ ] Long Service Leave
- [ ] I have not used any of these leave/s in this context

Father Care: Barriers and Gateways, Work and Policy for Primary Earner

52. Reasons for not taking leave

1. What are the main reasons you have not used any leave arrangements for caring for dependents?

Father Care: Barriers and Gateways, Work and Policy for Primary Earner

53. Recent Episodes of Care

***1. Using your most recent episode/s of care, please indicate the nature and duration of leave you have used for child caring purposes.**

For example if you took -

Carer's Leave: 4 days to care for my two-year-old whilst sick and excluded from day care OR

48/52 Leave Purchase: Purchased two extra weeks to use in Christmas school holidays to care for 3 children

Carer's Leave	
48/52 Leave Purchase Arrangements	
Lactation/ Feeding Leave	
Annual Leave/ Recreation Leave	
Sick Leave	
Career Break	
Leave without Pay/ Unpaid Leave	
Long Service Leave	
Flexitime, Time in Lieu or similar	

***2. When did this episode of care occur?**

- ◯ In the last week
- ◯ In the last month
- ◯ In the last three months
- ◯ In the last six months
- ◯ In the last year
- ◯ Longer than twelve months ago

Father Care: Barriers and Gateways, Work and Policy for Primary Earner

54. Changing Work Arrangements - Utilisation

These questions ask you about any changes you have made with your current employer regarding your usual/ or previous work arrangements to meet care responsibilities for children. This includes things such as changes to your pattern of hours, start and finish times, working from home etc. You may answer these questions relating to care for ANY children in your family.

1. Please indicate the types of work arrangements/ changes you have utilised in the past to assist you in meeting your caring responsibilities.

- [ ] Job Share
- [ ] Part-time work
- [ ] Compressed work week
- [ ] Flexible Start and Finishing times
- [ ] Employee Based Rostering
- [ ] Work from home/ telecommuting
- [ ] Rostered Days Off/ Flexi Time/ Time in Lieu
- [ ] Non standard hours of work/ shift work
- [ ] I have not used any of the above

Father Care: Barriers and Gateways, Work and Policy for Primary Earner

55. Reason for not using changed work arrangements

***1. Which statement best describes why you have not utilised these arrangements.**

You may choose more than one reason

- [ ] Was not available / made available to me in my workplace
- [ ] Would be detrimental to my career
- [ ] It is not necessary because my partner is primary carer
- [ ] It would be disruptive to my workplace/ colleagues
- [ ] I am too busy to take any time off from work
- [ ] These provisions are technically available but no men take it up in my workplace
- [ ] It is only available to mothers/ women in the workplace
- [ ] Have not felt the need to use these provisions
- [ ] My job role is not able to accommodate any flexibility/ work changes
- [ ] Other (please specify)

Father Care: Barriers and Gateways, Work and Policy for Primary Earner

56. Details of Changed Work Arrangements

***1. Please provide some details around the nature and duration of your most recent arrangement/ need.**

For example if you arranged:

Telecommuting - I work one day a week from home to care for my two-year-old as a break from day care while my partner works

Change start and finish times- I start work at 10 am and finish at 6 pm 3 days per week to drop my children to school

Job Share

Part-time work

Compressed Work Week

Flexible Start and Finishing times

Employee Based Rostering

Work from home/ telecommuting

Rostered Days Off/ Flexi Time/ Time in Lieu

Non standard hours of work/ shift work

2. When did you make this arrangement ?

- In the last week
- In the last month
- In the last three months
- In the last six months
- In the last year
- Longer than twelve months ago

3. Was this an informal or formal arrangement?

- Informal Arrangement- no consultation with workplace
- Informal Arrangement - I consulted verbally with my employer/ manager
- Formal Arrangement - I had to complete a formal proposal/ agreement with my manager/ employer
- Formal Arrangement - I negotiated this as part of my employment contract

Other (please specify)

Father Care: Barriers and Gateways, Work and Policy for Primary Earner

57. Employer/ Workplace Experiences

***1. Have you ever been denied flexibility and / or requests for work changes to meet your care giving responsibilities from your employer?**

- ◯ Have never requested such changes
- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

Father Care: Barriers and Gateways, Work and Policy for Primary Earner

58. Reasons For Denial

1. Using your most recent episode of denial, on what basis was your request denied? You may choose more than one response

- [ ] Employer or Manager felt it was unfeasible to accommodate such an arrangement
- [ ] Business/ productivity loss was considered too great
- [ ] Request was thought to create inequity/ sense of unfairness amongst other employees
- [ ] Request was thought to be unnecessary
- [ ] Request would set an unwelcome precedent
- [ ] Employer did not accept that I had caring responsibilities
- [ ] Employer did not accept that I was entitled to make such a request
- [ ] My performance would suffer
- [ ] My performance was not considered 'good enough' to accommodate the request
- [ ] Not sure

Other (please specify)

2. Did you appeal this decision in anyway?

- ( ) Yes
- ( ) No

3. Please provides some details around how you appealed this decision - who did you turn to, what did you do?

Father Care: Barriers and Gateways, Work and Policy for Primary Earner

59. Final Statements: Leave Policy

These last four pages ask you to respond to a series of statements.

Please answer as honestly as you can - selecting the answer that BEST describes how your feel.

***1. Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding care based leave/s**

	Agree	Disagree	Neutral
People who leave work to care for children should not be paid for this	○	○	○
Paid Parental leave would be more equally shared between partners if money was not an issue	○	○	○
Paying sick leave at minimum wage is unacceptable	○	○	○
Paying Parental Leave at minimum wage is acceptable	○	○	○
Both men and women should have equal rights to Paid Parental Leave	○	○	○
If there were no financial barriers, I would step away from work to look after my baby for three months or more	○	○	○
Each parent should have their own entitlement to Paid Parental Leave so they can primary care for the child at some point.	○	○	○
All mothers should all have at least 6 weeks paid leave without any financial loss to recover from birth and establish breast feeding	○	○	○
Fathers should be entitled to take Paid Paternity Leave to help the mother during the immediate post- birth period	○	○	○
People who take time away from work to care should have access to fully paid leave to do so	○	○	○

Father Care: Barriers and Gateways, Work and Policy for Primary Earner

60. Final Statements: Rights and family size

***1. Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statements**

	Agree	Disagree	Neutral
Fathers have just as much right to be the primary carer of their children as mothers	○	○	○
It is a father's right to take time away from work to care for children	○	○	○
Having children is a private matter and up to families to manage	○	○	○
I have as many children as I want	○	○	○
I would like more children but cannot afford to have more	○	○	○
I would like more children but it is just too hard to balance a career and kids	○	○	○
Having children is a personal choice and the consequences are yours	○	○	○
My partner has the most say over how many children we have	○	○	○
My thoughts about family size are less important than my partner's	○	○	○
Family size is a matter of what you can afford	○	○	○

Father Care: Barriers and Gateways, Work and Policy for Primary Earner

61. Final Statements: Gender and Care

***1. Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statements**

	Agree	Disagree	Neutral
I think more men would take leave and spend some time as the primary carer if breastfeeding was not an issue	○	○	○
All fathers should take some leave from work to be the primary carer of the child	○	○	○
Fathers are as attached to their children as mothers	○	○	○
The role fathers play in the lives of their children is not as valued in society as the role of mothers	○	○	○
Men don't really enjoy being with children full-time as much as women	○	○	○
It is natural that the man is the primary bread winner when children come along	○	○	○
Fathers should only be entitled to paid parental leave if the mother no longer wishes to stay at home	○	○	○
If they can afford to, it is best if mothers not work before the kids are at primary school	○	○	○
Fathers are not as good at caring for pre-school children as mothers	○	○	○
Most fathers feel pressure to earn the money for the family	○	○	○

Father Care: Barriers and Gateways, Work and Policy for Primary Earner

62. Final Statements: Workplace and Care

***1. Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statements**

	Agree	Disagree	Neutral
Providing financially for the family is as valuable to children as hands on caring and attendance	○	○	○
Being away from the workforce for more than three months adversely affects your career	○	○	○
Mothers face some penalties in the workplace when they try to manage work and care	○	○	○
Balancing career and caring responsibilities is far easier than I imagined it would be	○	○	○
Fathers face some penalties in the workplace when they try to manage work and care	○	○	○
In my experience, workplaces do not expect men to take time off from work to care for their kids	○	○	○
In my experience, men taking parental leave is almost unheard of in the workplace	○	○	○
Part-time workers are not as committed to their career as full-time workers	○	○	○
I am very interested in doing part time work or in job share arrangements for family reasons	○	○	○
At work, men are not as readily accepted as parents with carers' needs compared to women	○	○	○
Part -time jobs are not as valued in the workplace as full-time jobs	○	○	○

Father Care: Barriers and Gateways, Work and Policy for Primary Earner

63. Your Comments

This section invites you to share any suggestions, stories and perspectives on work, care, gender and family life today.

1. Please feel free to provide any comments or observations on the following issues (below)

Fatherhood, Work and Care	
Motherhood, Work and Care	
Paid Parental Leave	
Family Friendly Work Provisions	
Family, Government Policy and Parental Rights	

Father Care: Barriers and Gateways, Work and Policy for Primary Earner

64. Thank You

Thank you for completing this survey. Your input, time and experiences are valued.

Before exiting the survey please note the following

1. As part of this study we may conduct further interviews and follow up with respondents and also their partners.

If you think you and your partner would be interested in participating in future interviews as part of this study please leave your name and an email address below.

Your name and email address will remain confidential and will not be used for any other purpose than for the researcher to email you further information on any subsequent interview or research opportunities should they arise.

Finally, if you feel you have experienced distress as a result of completing this survey or would like to talk to someone in relation to your work and family care needs- you could contact the following providers who may be able to assist you.

Lifeline Counselling - on 1800 806 292 or via the Web: www.lifeline.org.au
Parentline Counselling – 1300 301 300 or email parentline@boystown.com.au
WIRE – Women Information and Referral Service: 1300 134 130 or inforequests@wire.org.au
Mensline Australia - 1300 789 978 or via the web http://www.mensline.org.au

Father Care: Barriers and Gateways, Work and Policy for Primary Earner

65. SURVEY TERMS AND CONDITIONS

To enter the survey you need to read and agree to the information contained in the explanatory statements.

***1. I would like to .....**

- ◯ Return to beginning of the survey
- ◯ Exit the survey

Father Care: Barriers and Gateways, Work and Policy for Primary Earner

66. Alternate Participation

You have indicated you do not meet all of the survey criteria but would like to participate in the study.

This particular study is designed for primary breadwinner fathers with preschool children. There may be opportunities to participate in other research on work and family either as part of this study or future evaluations.

1. If you would like to be contacted by the researcher should future research opportunities arise, please leave your details below.

This information will not be shared with anyone. The researcher will contact you should an opportunity arise in the future or for follow up studies.

Father Care: Barriers and Gateways, Work and Policy for Primary Earner

67. Exit Survey

Thank you for your interest in this study.

I wish all the very best for you and your family in the future.

Appendix 3: Interview Questions

Interview Schedule:

1. Self
2. Consent
3. Procedure
4. Couple details check

NAME:

DATE:

INTERVIEW DETAILS

Main research question:

What factors facilitate or inhibit working fathers' take up of Paid Parental Leave and other family friendly work provisions?

Review – The individual, couple, and workplace factors:

- What are the policy and employment provisions considered necessary to fathers for primary care and balancing work and care responsibilities?
- In what ways do fathers' perceptions and actions in work and care differ with their partners' and how are such differences perceived and negotiated within the couple dyad?
- How doe explain differences between the ideal and real?

Expand survey responses:

- Conversation – Was there a conversation about who would primary care? What did you consider as options/ discussion
- PPL – necessary and sufficient conditions (Survey review).
- Note drivers of primary care – process (How did this come to be?)
- How would each of you feel if PPL was split? Is this a realistic option for you?
- Workplace acceptability of care. How were you encouraged as a carer?

Data checking:

- Rights vs. privilege? Attitudinal data - who has the right to care?
- Breastfeeding? Impacts
- Family history/extended family – help and leaders?
- What makes a good father/mother?
- What do employers need to know/government?

Specific questions for this couple:

Appendix 4: Recruitment Correspondence (Employer Letter)

Building Diversity and Wellbeing at Company Name

Message from the CEO

Company Name is committed to being a fair and flexible employer. We have made great progress on our diversity and inclusion strategies and have continued to evolve our people practices and policies. Today we have an opportunity to expand our understanding of work, caregiving and gender through participation in an innovative research project from Monash University. The focus of this study is on the impact of work and care on primary earner fathers with preschool children. As a global employer we have noted an increased interest from fathers to assume a more active role in the care of their children. Their aspiration for greater participation in care however is often difficult to realise even with the provision of supportive care leave polices. This study aims to find out why? We are delighted to offer our working fathers a voice in this national research undertaking through the online survey.

A link to the survey, participant eligibility and how we will use this information can be found below. Like our employee engagement surveys, all participation is completely anonymous. There is no way for us to tell if you have participated or not and there is no way to trace any individual responses.

Supporting the launch of this study is a timely opportunity to improve our understanding of the needs of working dads with young children and begin our targeted exploration of both men and women's experience of the work and family interface and the interdependence between performance, career success and responsibilities beyond work.

If you are one of Company Name's working dads with young children, I encourage you to participate in this ground-breaking study. I look forward to keeping you updated with results from the study and our progress on our wider diversity goals.

END

Survey Details

The study is focused on fathers with preschool children. To participate in this study, you must be

1. A father and the main earner of the family
2. Part of an intact couple (married or de-facto)
3. Have at least one preschool (not yet in primary school) child living at home.

Click on the link to complete the survey of find out more LINK

Appendix 5: Key Demographics of the Couple Interview Sample

Name	Salary	Organisations	Position	Education	Partner Hours	Partner Role	Partner Sal	Partner Education	Reported Access to Leave	Father Primary Care	No Child
Gary & Victoria	$100,000-$149,999	LUCAS	Manager	Bachelor	PT	Professional	$35,000 - $44,999	PhD	Yes	No	1
Alison & Harry	$100,000-$149,999	MORE	Manager	Bachelor	FT	Professional	$75,000 - $99,999		No	Yes (Unpaid Leave)	2
Stephanie & Roger	$100,000-$149,999	DARWIN	Manager	Bachelor	PT	Community & Personal Services	< $15,000	Bachelor	No	No	2
Salman & Anita	$55,000-$74,999	MORE	Professional	Post Grad	NW	NA	-	Post Grad	No	No	1
Sharon & James	$100,000-$149,999	MORE	Manager	Bachelor	PT	Professional	$45,000 - $54,999	Bachelor	Yes	No	2

Name	Salary	Organisations	Position	Education	Partner Hours	Partner Role	Partner Sal	Partner Education	Reported Access to Leave	Father Primary Care	No Child
Bryce & Angela	$55,000-$74,999	LUCAS	Professional	Bachelor	NW	NA	-	Bachelor	No	No	2
Kylee & Lyndon	$75,000-$99,999	HENSON	Clerical/ Admin	TAFE	FT	Professional	$75,000 - $99,999	TAFE	No	Yes	3
Tamara & Anthony	$100,000 $149,999	HENSON	Professional	Post Grad	NW	NA	-	Post Grad	Yes	No	1
Melissa & Dale	$75,000-$99,999	HENSON	Professional	Bachelor	NW	NA	-	Bachelor	No	No	2
Rick & Mandy	$150,00-199,999	LINCOLN	Professional	Post Grad	PT	Manager	$100,000 - $149,000	Bachelor	Yes	Yes	1
Shelly & Paul	$100,000-$149,999	LINCOLN	Professional	Post Grad	PT	Professional	$100,000-$149,000	Post Grad	Yes	Yes	1
Noah & Michelle	$150,00-$199,999	LINCOLN	Professional	Bachelor	FT	Professional	$100,000 - $149,000	PhD	Yes	Yes	2

Name	Salary	Organisations	Position	Education	Partner Hours	Partner Role	Partner Sal	Partner Education	Reported Access to Leave	Father Primary Care	No Child
Samar & Henry	$100,00 – $149,999	LINCOLN	Professional	Bachelor	PT	Manager	$150,000 -$199,999	Bachelor	Yes	Yes	2
Garth & Bianca	$150,00- $199,999	LINCOLN	Professional	Bachelor	NW	NA	-	TAFE	Yes	Yes*	2

*Used Leave Without Pay (LWOP) as father was at another firm that did not have PPL

Appendix 6: Logistic Regression Outputs for Primary Care Over Time

Likelihood Ratio Tests				
Effect	Model Fitting Criteria	Likelihood Ratio Tests		
	-2 Log Likelihood of Reduced Model	Chi-Square	df	Sig.
Intercept	52.792[a]	.000	0	.
Group1	280.297	227.505	10	.000
The chi-square statistic is the difference in -2 log-likelihoods between the final model and a reduced model. The reduced model is formed by omitting an effect from the final model. The null hypothesis is that all parameters of that effect are 0.				
[a] This reduced model is equivalent to the final model because omitting the effect does not increase the degrees of freedom.				

Appendix 7: Ethics Approval

MONASH University

Monash University Human Research Ethics Committee (MUHREC)
Research Office

Human Ethics Certificate of Approval

Date:	**1 February 2013**
Project Number:	**CF12/2261 - 2012001208**
Project Title:	**Examining father's participation in paid parental leave, family friendly work provisions and the implications of policy on the gendered division of care in Australia**
Chief Investigator:	**Prof Margaret Alston**
Approved:	**From: 1 February 2013 To: 1 February 2018**

Terms of approval

1. The Chief investigator is responsible for ensuring that permission letters are obtained, if relevant, and a copy forwarded to MUHREC before any data collection can occur at the specified organisation. **Failure to provide permission letters to MUHREC before data collection commences is in breach of the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research and the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research**.
2. Approval is only valid whilst you hold a position at Monash University.
3. It is the responsibility of the Chief Investigator to ensure that all investigators are aware of the terms of approval and to ensure the project is conducted as approved by MUHREC.
4. You should notify MUHREC immediately of any serious or unexpected adverse effects on participants or unforeseen events affecting the ethical acceptability of the project.
5. The Explanatory Statement must be on Monash University letterhead and the Monash University complaints clause must contain your project number.
6. **Amendments to the approved project (including changes in personnel):** Requires the submission of a Request for Amendment form to MUHREC and must not begin without written approval from MUHREC. Substantial variations may require a new application.
7. **Future correspondence:** Please quote the project number and project title above in any further correspondence.
8. **Annual reports:** Continued approval of this project is dependent on the submission of an Annual Report. This is determined by the date of your letter of approval.
9. **Final report:** A Final Report should be provided at the conclusion of the project. MUHREC should be notified if the project is discontinued before the expected date of completion.
10. **Monitoring:** Projects may be subject to an audit or any other form of monitoring by MUHREC at any time.
11. **Retention and storage of data:** The Chief Investigator is responsible for the storage and retention of original data pertaining to a project for a minimum period of five years.

[redacted]

Professor Ben Canny
Chair, MUHREC

cc: Ms Samone McCurdy

Postal – Monash University, Vic 3800, Australia
Building 3E, Room 111, Clayton Campus, Wellington Road, Clayton

[redacted]

Appendix 8: Calculated Confidence Intervals of Necessary Conditions

	N	%	N	%	N	%	Prop	Lower	Upper
Necessary Conditions (Replacement Rates of Pay)	524	55.1%	427	44.9%	951	100.0%	0.55	0.519386	0.582612
Necessary Conditions (Own Allocation)	420	44.2%	531	55.8%	951	100.0%	0.44	0.410079	0.473202
Necessary Conditions (More than 6 weeks)	338	35.5%	613	64.5%	951	100.0%	0.36	0.324994	0.385836
Necessary Conditions (No Breastfeeding Issues)	335	35.2%	616	64.8%	951	100.0%	0.35	0.321901	0.382621
Necessary Conditions (Part time)	233	24.5%	718	75.5%	951	100.0%	0.25	0.21767	0.272341
Necessary Conditions (Superannuation)	207	21.8%	744	78.2%	951	100.0%	0.22	0.191438	0.243893
Necessary Conditions (More than 6 months)	86	9.0%	865	91.0%	951	100.0%	0.09	0.072203	0.108659

Confidence intervals were calculated by the formula $\hat{p} \pm 1.96\sqrt{\frac{\hat{p}(1-\hat{p})}{n}}$ $w$here $\hat{p}$=calculated proportion and n=sample size.