

Fathers' Constructions, Experiences and Negotiations of Flexible Working Arrangements ^[1]

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Over the past few decades, expectations for fathers have shifted away from the traditional breadwinning model of fathering towards a model where men are actively engaged and involved in providing care for their child(ren). Alongside this shift, the benefits of involved fathering for men and their families have been well documented. Flexible working has been identified as a means for men to increase their involvement with their child(ren), however, there has been a paucity of Australian fathers adopting flexibility for the purposes of care. This research explores how fathers working in the finance sector in Australia discursively constructed and positioned their role as a father and as a worker, and the role of flexible working in facilitating involved fathering. Semi-structured interviews were carried out with 43 working fathers from diverse occupational roles, with the data analysed using Foucauldian Discourse Analysis. The findings suggest that fathers face significant symbolic and structural barriers to adopting flexibility, and that these barriers are contingent upon, and are shaped by, their organisational environment, occupational status, and by normative discourses surrounding masculinity and fathering. A commonality for fathers across all occupational status levels was the invisibility of fatherhood within the finance sector, and the stigma associated with modifying work arrangements to care for their family. Findings are explored and discussed through a critical psychology and post-structural lens, and using theory and concepts associated with gender, power, and identity from across disciplines. The findings of the thesis highlight the need to: address restrictive organisational cultures; promote men's adoption of FWAs for childcare; raise awareness of the role of occupational status in men's experiences of FWAs; reform organisational and public policy to better engage and include men; and to enable fathers to share with and learn from other men in relation to adopting flexibility for caring purposes.

Region: Australia and New Zealand ^[3]

Tags: father involvement ^[4]

parental and maternity leave ^[5]

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