

**I AM FATHER: AN ANALYSIS OF MASCULINE IDENTITIES OF  
PROFESSIONALLY EMPLOYED FATHERS AND THEIR  
PARENTAL LEAVE DECISIONS**

**JOSEPH ROBERT RICE**  
**Bachelors of Management, University of Lethbridge, 2006**

A Research Project  
Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies  
Of the University of Lethbridge  
In Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the Degree

**MASTER OF SCIENCE IN MANAGEMENT**

Faculty of Management  
University of Lethbridge  
LETHBRIDGE, ABERTA, CANADA

© Joseph Robert Rice, 2008

**I AM FATHER: AN ANALYSIS OF MASCULINE IDENTITIES OF  
PROFESSIONALLY EMPLOYED FATHERS AND THEIR  
PARENTAL LEAVE DECISIONS**

**JOSEPH ROBERT RICE**

Approved:

---

Supervisor: Mary Runté, PhD.

---

Date

---

Reader: John Usher, PhD.

---

Date

---

External Examiner: Jeff Hearn, PhD.  
Hanken-Swedish School of Economics and Business  
Administration, Helsinki, Finland

---

Date

---

Chairperson: Helen Kelley, PhD.

---

Date

## Dedication

“I felt something impossible for me to explain in words. Then, when they took her away, it hit me. I got scared all over again and began to feel giddy. Then it came to me... I was a father.”

Nat King Cole

I dedicate this project to my family, for I am father...

## **Abstract**

This thesis project attempts to apply Hearn's (2004) proposed seven aspects of the hegemony of men by investigating the decision-making process of male professors deciding whether to exercise parental leave benefits available to them. Focusing on the parental leave decision allows me to gather detailed data about how men relate their family and work obligations into their perceptions of masculinity and their identities as fathers.

Recognizing that parental leave taken by men is socially progressive, it may constitute a weakness in the hegemony of men as described by Hearn (2004). The motivation behind fathers' parental leave decisions may go beyond legalities and organizational policies. Masculinity's predetermined gender roles combined with identity may be a source of contradictory influences on the decision to pursue parental leave rights provided by the Canadian government. Therefore, I studied the extent to which the hegemony of men influences the individual's decision-making process.

## **Acknowledgements**

I would like to take this opportunity to thank my wife Jacqueline for all her support, encouragement and love. I could not have done this without you.

I am extremely grateful to my supervisor Dr. Mary Runté for her patience, guidance and support throughout the research process. I don't think I would have done this without her encouragement. I would like to thank my second reader Dr. John Usher for his input. His knowledge of the literature was invaluable in allowing me to focus the scope of my topic. Thank you to Dr. Jeff Hearn for his time and input. I am honoured that you would take the time to review my work.

Thank you to all the faculty members that volunteered their time to me as research subjects. This study would not have been possible without your input. As well, many thanks to Dr. Helen Kelley, Tammy Rogness and the entire IT support group for their time and effort.

Finally, I would like to thank my children Kaitlyn, Andra and Robert, for being the inspiration of my topic choice. Becoming a father has shown me what is important in life...

## Table of Contents

DEDICATION .....	III
ABSTRACT .....	IV
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	V
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	VI
LIST OF TABLES .....	IX
LIST OF FIGURES .....	X
1. INTRODUCTION .....	1
2. LITERATURE REVIEW .....	5
2.1 WORK-FAMILY CONFLICT .....	5
2.2 FEMINIST THEORY AND MEN .....	6
2.2.1 Social Processes .....	9
2.2.2 Distinction.....	9
2.2.3 Practices .....	11
2.2.4 Complicitness.....	11
2.2.5 Contradiction.....	12
2.2.6 Support.....	13
2.2.7 Interrelations .....	14
3. RESEARCH FRAMEWORK.....	18
3.1 FEMINIST THEORY AND MEN .....	18
3.2 WORK-FAMILY CONFLICT .....	18

3.3 DECISION-MAKING PROCESS .....	19
4. METHODOLOGY .....	20
4.1 RESEARCH PARADIGM .....	20
4.2 DATA GATHERING .....	21
4.3 SAMPLE SELECTION .....	23
4.4 DATA ANALYSIS .....	25
5. FINDINGS .....	27
5.1 SOCIAL PROCESS .....	27
5.2 DISTINCTION .....	33
5.3 PRACTICES .....	37
5.4 COMPLICITNESS .....	42
5.5 CONTRADICTION .....	44
5.6 SUPPORT .....	47
5.7 INTERRELATIONS .....	51
5.7.1 Provider .....	52
5.7.2 Revolutionary .....	54
5.7.3 Behaviour-based Conflict .....	57
6. DISCUSSION .....	60
6. 1 FEMINIST THEORY AND MEN .....	60
6.4 PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS .....	64
7. CONCLUSIONS .....	66
7.1 THEORETICAL CONTRIBUTION .....	66

7.2 PRACTICAL CONTRIBUTIONS.....	68
7.3 LIMITATIONS.....	71
7.4 FUTURE RESEARCH.....	71
REFERENCES.....	81
APPENDIXES.....	84
APPENDIX 1: PRELIMINARY DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONS.....	84
APPENDIX 2: ETHNOGRAPHIC DECISION MODEL.....	84
APPENDIX 3: INTERVIEW GUIDE.....	85

## List of Tables

Table 1.1 Aspect Reference Guide.....	4
---------------------------------------	---

## **List of Figures**

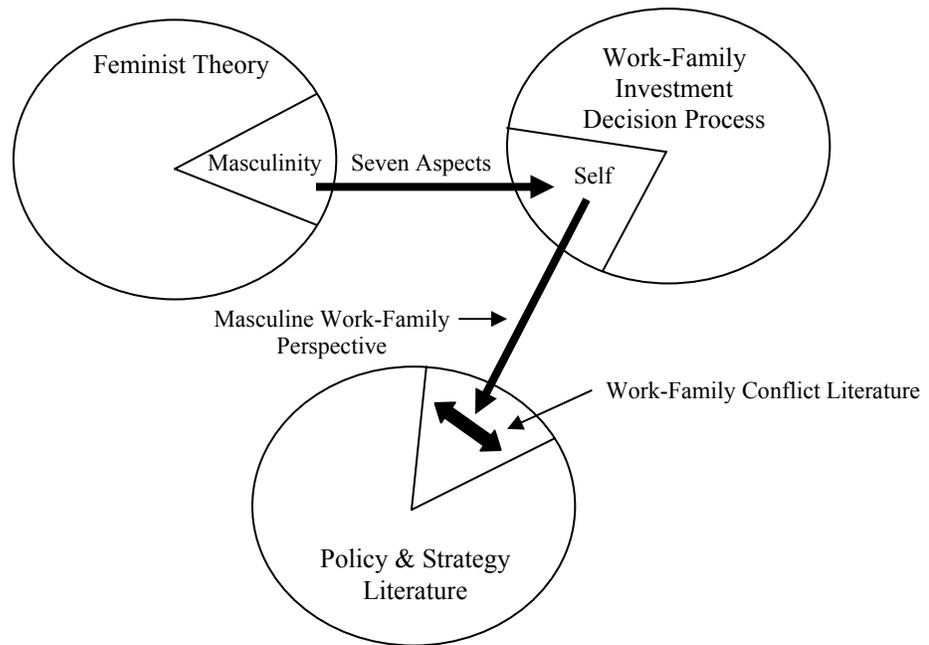
Figure 1.1 Masculinity and Work-Family Conflict.....	2
Figure 4.1 Research Paradigm.....	20

## **1. Introduction**

In this study, I apply the seven aspects of the hegemony of men by investigating the decision-making process of fathers regarding whether to exercise parental leave policies available to them. Interviews are used as a data gathering tool with questions focusing on masculinity and ‘self’. I use the term ‘self’ to represent a man’s identity as a father that is merged with their concept of manhood, or masculinity. The self is the filter which work-family investment decisions must pass through. For example, men considering exercising a parental leave benefit must filter the decision through their view of themselves as fathers and as a person. The discourse of ‘manhood’ or ‘masculinity’ has been labelled by Hearn as ‘hegemonic masculinity’ (Hearn, 2004). This thesis examines the seven aspects of the hegemony of men described by Hearn through the process of interviews. A shift from hegemonic masculinity to the hegemony of men “seeks to address the double complexity that men are both a social category formed by the gender system and dominant collective and individual agents of social practice” (Hearn, 2004, p. 59). The social category formed by the gender system refers to the taken-for-granted idea that men are the economic ruling class of patriarchal gender practices, whereas the individual agent of social practice refers to the ranking of individual men by critiquing their ability to maintain a masculine image (Hearn, 2004). Although it has been suggested that formulations in gender and power to locate masculine and feminine activities in order to understand the “global dominance” of men over women is inadequate (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005), I am continuing with the sex distinction in this study because of the sex based implications of parenthood. Furthermore, analysing the concept that a hybrid hegemonic masculinity can reproduce

itself through adaptation may be possible when hegemonic beliefs are challenged by expanding the arena for gaining distinction and dominance into the domestic domain (Demetriou, 2001).

Self is the participants' view of themselves as men and as fathers. The notion of self then influences, and is influenced by the decision-making process. Figure 1.1 shows conceptually how masculinity, as represented by Hearn's seven aspects of the hegemony of men, is internalized and blended with men's concept of self during a key work-family investment decision such as whether or not to take parental leave. It also demonstrates the possibility of including the masculine perspective of the work-family investment decision into the fold of work-family conflict literature.



*Figure 1.1 Masculinity and Work-Family Conflict*

Work-family conflict is positioned within the realm of policy and strategy literature because the research in work-family often points to adjusting policy and culture norms in the workforce as options to reduce work-family conflicts. Work-family conflict literature was defined in response to the increased dual roles of women entering the workforce while trying to maintain their family roles (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). However, shifting gender roles for both men and women have prompted me to believe that work-family conflict literature has not examined men and men's experiences to the same extent as women's experiences have been examined. In particular, the classification of work-family conflict as a gender issue has me questioning why the term *family* is only associated with women. "Self identity theory, although limited in application within the HRM [Human Resource Management] work-family literature, is also used to support entrenched, gendered social roles" (Runté, 2005, p. 181) which assumes women will be the caregiver. Because of this assumption, I believe that fathers need to be more proactive in creating new gender roles for family involvement. Understanding the work-family decision-making process in men is the first step in recognising what men are dealing with when faced with decisions that challenge masculine ideologies.

For this project, I investigate the seven aspects of the hegemony of men proposed by Jeff Hearn (2004) to determine if the seven aspects influence the parental leave decision. I also use the seven aspects as a guide for establishing a context in which to investigate men, their 'self' and their decision-making process when faced with a work-family investment decision. I have relabelled Hearn's seven aspects as social process, distinction, practices, complicitness, contradiction, support and interrelations. A

comprehensive definition of each of these aspects is included in the literature review (section four); however Table 1.1 can also be used as a quick reference.

*Table 1.1 Aspect Reference Guide*

Aspect	Definition
1. Social Process	The acceptance of the category of men and men's roles
2. Distinction	Ranking of men
3. Practices	The dissemination of men's agendas
4. Complicitness	The confirmation of men's practices through repetition
5. Contradiction	The contradiction between the actions of men and the ideal, most desired, form of men's behaviour
6. Support	The existence of masculine behaviour through the "consent" of women
7. Interrelations	The ways in which aspects 1-6 interrelate during the decision-making process

In Canada, men have the legal right to participate in the raising of newborn children through parental leave legislation. However, statistics show that the majority of men are not exercising their legal rights as new fathers. A father has a legal right to exercise up to 37 weeks of parental leave if they have been employed by their employer for at least 52 weeks. The 37 week total is *shared* between parents, so the total time of leave available to one parent will depend on the second parent's duration of parental leave (Alberta Government, 2001). Therefore, my question is:

1. How do Hearn's (2004) seven aspects of the hegemony of men influence father's work-family decisions involving parental leave?

## 2. Literature Review

### *2.1 Work-family Conflict*

Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) define work-family conflict by separating it into three categories. These categories are time-based, strain-based and behaviour-based conflicts. The category that I am particularly interested in is behaviour-based conflict because of the fit between masculinity and expected behaviour. For example, the two traits most commonly associated with masculinity are authority and aggression (Seidler, 1994). These two traits can be depicted as favourable for management positions (Runté, 2004; 2005), but are not words I would use to describe good parenting.

Behaviour-based conflict establishes that a person will experience increased work-family conflict as their expected behaviour at work deviates from their expected behaviour at home (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). One example of this is a manager that is expected to be self-reliant, emotionally restricted, physically tough and aggressive. However, the expectations at home are much more feminine in nature. At home it is expected that one should be dependent, emotionally expressive, passive, and nurturing (Runté, 2005).

The focus of the behaviour-based conflict literature is on women who are being pressured to act in a masculine fashion at the workplace due to assumed behaviour expectations for managers (Thompson, Pleck & Ferrera, 1992). Runté and Mills (2004) state that:

Although the level of paternal involvement has increased, this increase has primarily occurred on weekends; fathers continue to devote significantly less time than mothers to the rearing of their children regardless of mothers' engagement to market employment (Acock and Demo, 1994; Yeung et al., 2001). The

emergence of the “new father” role only on weekends, the presentation of maternal responsibility (blame) for child development, and the disproportionate time spent by fathers with children suggests that the discourse of family has not shifted to include the father as “an equal partner” (Goldscheider and Waite, 1991). It is women who navigate between parental and employee roles. It is therefore women who pay the “toll” for crossing the boundary between work and family. (p. 240)

The above quote is an example of the research on work-family and how it incorporates assumed gender roles. Runté and Mills (2004) demonstrate how research discusses women’s predetermined roles. However, the quote also shows that men are not included in the family role even though it refers to men to make a point. Looking directly at men’s decision-making within the context of masculinity and their “new father” roles will broaden the work-family literature by outlining reasons why men are not “an equal partner” as a caregiver in the family (Goldscheider & Waite, 1991). I believe that the application of Greenhaus and Beutell’s (1985) behaviour-based conflict can be expanded to include men. The expected shift in behaviour from their established management roles to a more nurturing caregiver role is similar to the expected shift in behaviour that women experience when moving from a caregiver role to a management role (Runté, 2004).

## ***2.2 Feminist Theory and Men***

“The process of investment in work and family roles is poorly understood; most research in this area has been descriptive, rather than theoretical (Kingston, 1989; Lambert, 1990; Sekaran & Hall, 1989)” (Lobel, 1991, p. 507). In fact, Lobel (1991) also states that there are some developed models that describe the effect of family and work investment; however a process that explains “career and family investment” (Lobel 1991,

p.508) simultaneously has not been elaborated. Career and family investment (career-family investment) refers to the behaviours associated with choosing between, or balancing career and family.

Existing literature is applying the concept of masculine identity at a macro level when discussing men's gender roles. Several other terms such as masculinities, hegemonic masculinity, hegemony of men, critical studies on men and men's studies are used to describe research that is dedicated to men's behaviour and role in social behaviour (some examples include but are not limited to Fournier & Smith, 2006 Hearn, 1998, 2004; Lupton, 2000, 2006). Within critical sociology, I use the seven aspects of the hegemony of men by Jeff Hearn (2004) as a guide for establishing a context to investigate men, their 'self' and their decision-making process when faced with a work and family investment decision. These hegemonic aspects of men are drawn down from the macro level to a micro level in order to examine their influences on an individual's decision.

Hearn's literature involving the seven aspects of the hegemony of men and interrelations of men and masculinities has been focused at the macro level. However, I am shifting the focus of research from a macro to a micro orientation in order to examine the implications of the hegemony of men on the parental leave decision-making process of the individual (Hearn, 2004). The shift to a micro focus also allows me to interpret any possible effects that the seven aspects of masculinity may have on the decision-making process. Effects that macro influences can have on an individual's decision-making process have been illustrated in previous discussions regarding masculine fundamentalism. Connell (1998) states that, "on the part of groups whose power is

challenged but still dominant, is to reaffirm *local* gender orthodoxies and hierarchies” (Connell, 1998, p. 17). This discussion refers to the maintenance of the male power structure in cultures that are being challenged by western ideas about equality between men and women. However, I believe that the principles of backlash may be part of an individual’s parental leave decision-making process. The focus on the micro decision process should help with furthering research on masculine behaviour and work-family by providing an in-depth account of the interaction between the micro decision-making process of an individual and the macro aspects of being male.

A key decision for men, regarding work and family investment, is the choice of whether or not to exercise parental leave rights when becoming a new father. Focusing on this key decision allows me to break down the decision-making process of men by narrowing in on how external and internal pressures of masculinity are weighed within the criteria of ‘self’ during the decision-making process.

This work analyses how the seven aspects are internalized by new fathers when faced with conflicting role obligations in an attempt to answer Lobel’s (1991) call to model the process of work-family investment decisions. The focus on men’s decision-making process allows me to bring the feminist theory of masculinity into the fold of work-family conflict theory while developing a decision model simultaneously. Introducing ‘self’ into the decision-making process allows me to convey how each individual’s interpretation of aspect importance affects the interrelations between the aspects. The following sections within this literature review further define the seven aspects of the hegemony of men and relates to how these aspects have influenced the formation of established gender roles.

### ***2.2.1 Social Processes***

The social process of men denotes the “hegemonic acceptance of the category of men” (Hearn, 2004, p. 60) through the taken-for-granted process of biological identification and other gender-specific practices. An example of the taken-for-granted process of gender-specific practices is the role gender has on the professional identification of airline pilots (Ashcroft, 2005). Ashcroft writes, “The transformation hinged around a particular form of white masculinity, embodied in the commanding officer....heterosexual paternal figure clashed with another fashionable image of pilots, the liberated ‘ladybird’, facilitating her retreat from the cockpit to cabin...(Corn, 1960)” (Ashcroft, 2005, p. 76).

Challenging the social process of men through changes in male employment choices demonstrates the gender-specific practices associated with men. Discussing the process of maintaining one’s masculinity categorizes three types of challenges to masculinity that men face when entering female-concentrated occupations such as nursing. The three challenges are inability to confirm masculinity through work identity, fear of feminization and third, the threat of being stigmatized as effeminate or homosexual (Lupton, 2000). These challenges prove to be difficult because of the fight against social process and distinction. Being classified as a lower form of man because of the labelling of homosexual is a distinct challenge to those not conforming to the social process of men.

### ***2.2.2 Distinction***

The distinction of men comes from the “system of distinctions and categorizations between different forms of men and men’s practices to women, children

and other men” (Hearn, 2004, p. 60). The challenges of distinction can then be combated in one of two ways. First, the man reconstructs the presentation of the occupation or changes his job roles to better suit his ideas of masculinity. Second, the male worker realigns his ideas of masculinity with his occupation (Lupton, 2000).

A form of distinction is highlighted by “subcultures in the university that are male-dominated and senior in age and experience. This impacts informally in terms of expectations in the departments and in the governance committee deliberations in which they argue for fair treatment (*e.g.* single individual versus family for insurance premiums)” (Hollenshead, Sullivan, Smith, August, & Hamilton, 2005, p. 62). These subcultures are distinct because of their assumed superior rank over other colleagues of men that are not as senior in age or experience. In this context, power relations between senior groups and other men and women are the focus. The incorporation of masculine identities [distinction] into organizational power relations show how male individuals realign their identities, or job roles, to be more congruent with one another (Lupton, 2000).

Lupton (2006) also points out that there is a power relationship between the opportunities for men and women in the choice of entering female-concentrated occupation. He suggests “that working class men and women are less likely to reach higher-level occupations” and that “women are disproportionately found in lower-status, lower-paid occupations...” (Lupton, 2006, p.122). The study’s conclusions about power may be helpful in discerning whether men, as a group, have the same power limitations when choosing to leave the workforce for family. Expanding the realignment concept

through the study of individual's decision process should help clarify how masculine ideas fit into an individual's desired parental role.

### ***2.2.3 Practices***

Practices refer to the dissemination of the agendas of men. Dissemination practices are "in the media, the state, religion and so on" (Hearn, 2004, p. 60). An example of state involvement in the dissemination of ideas regarding men's behaviour is the mandatory parental leave invoked by Norway (Brandth & Kvande, 2001). The Norwegian government's focus on the agenda of 'family friendly' employment policies has caused an increase in men's presence in the home by reducing the effect on the negative perception of leaving work. The conclusion that mandatory state paternity laws remove the fear of organizational punishment which "has a positive effect on strengthening the father-child relationship..." (Brandth & Kvande, 2001 p. 264) was made.

### ***2.2.4 Complicitness***

"The identification of the most widespread, repeated forms of men's practices" (Hearn, 2004, p. 61) is the complicit behaviour that is more central to the construction of men (Hearn, 2004). Complicitness is the barrier for change because of the lack of challenge to tradition, routine and culture. An example of this is in the fight between Norwegian organizations and government policy. The flexible work scheme available to fathers in Norway is hardly used after fathers have fulfilled their mandatory leave requirements because it is still seen that "part-time is one of those things women do" (Brandth & Kvande, 2001 p. 263) when looking after children. The cultural element of

complicitness is illustrated by the speculation that “reluctance may be due to greater individualism and a stronger equation of work with individual achievement and identity in the United States than in England and Hong Kong” (Wharton & Blair-Loy, 2002, p. 25). This reluctance to change an individual’s work habits to meet family obligations stems from a culture that equates work-time to work-commitment and productivity (Wharton & Blair-Loy, 2002). The culture is then reinforced by the complicit behavior of continually accepting a high load workweek.

### ***2.2.5 Contradiction***

The most “natural(ized), ordinary, normal and most taken-for-granted practices to women, children and other men and their contradictory... meanings – rather than the depiction of the most culturally valued ideal” (Hearn, 2004, p. 61) refers to the contradiction between the actions of men and the ideal, or most desired, form of men’s behaviour. To highlight contradiction in this study it will be necessary for me to have participants describe what they believe society holds as the ideal man. A comparison between the participant’s description and their reasons for their parental leave decisions will be done to distinguish whether there is contradiction between the two. Further questioning into the contradiction aspect will help determine if there is a conscious or unconscious decision whether or not to contradict the hegemony of men. However, shifting the focus from a macro level to a micro level may cause the contradiction aspect of the hegemony of men to separate onto two groups. Contradiction may move from an external focus to both an internal and external process in the parental leave decision.

I believe that a male’s internal contradiction will be the most difficult aspect to examine while focusing on the work-family investment decision-making process because

of potential defensive reactions to questioning their motives. It will, however, be an interesting challenge to discover how the respondent's depiction of an ideal man moderates their internal filter of self. Contradiction will play a role if self and their interpretation of masculinity, or manhood are conflicting during the work-family investment decision-making process. However, contradictions between self and external ideals may be the central point for the challenge of assumptions.

Contradictions between self and external cultural values should be the focus point for challenging pre-established societal gender role ideals because of potential conflicts arising during the resistance process. For example, I believe that a man will align his conceptions of self with his decision but will have to consider the impact that his decision will have on his external image. The decision then becomes a reflection of what is the individual's tolerance level for potential societal backlash (McDonald et al., 2005).

Contradiction may highlight other motivators (such as resistance to hegemony) if the individual's idea of 'self' does not complement the final decision about work-family investment. For example, a man might decide to take parental leave even though he believes that he should be the provider because he wishes to support other men's decisions to take leave.

### ***2.2.6 Support***

The support of the traits of masculinity, or men, exists due to the 'consent' of women (Hearn 2004). "The question of how women may differently support certain practices of men, and subordinate other practices of men" (Hearn, 2004, p. 61) could be what defines the power relation between the two sexes. Support is a tricky category because of the opportunity to try and shift blame for men's behaviours to women.

However this is not a matter of blame. The aspect of support is a model to keep the investigation of men's decision-making patterns, masculinity and family from being segregated into vacuum arguments. The negotiation process between the parents involved in the work-family decision making process may be one of the key factors in the decision making process. For example, when Brandth and Kvande (2001) discuss the negotiation process, they suggest that, "it is most likely that the mother has the first choice, a norm being established that 'good mothers take a year's leave' (Branth & Overli, 1998). Thus, the mother may come to demand the parental leave to herself" (Brandth & Kvande, 2001, p. 261). The quote also illustrates the interrelations between support and the complicitness with the idea of a "good mother".

### ***2.2.7 Interrelations***

The interrelations between the previous six aspects above create an additional distinct, seventh aspect. An example of an interrelation between two aspects is the interaction between practices and complicitness. As you may have noticed, the mandatory leave policy introduced by Norway has caused a shift in the amount of men taking leave; however the number of men continuing leave after the mandatory time is complete is still small because of the complicit roles of men and women are still being disseminated by people within the organization (Brandth & Kvande, 2001).

Waters and Bardoal's (2006) six major themes to why policies are not used: communication, high workloads, career repercussions, peer influence, management attitudes and the administrative process is an example of highly interrelated aspects of masculinity. All six of these themes are culturally based within the organization because they all represent how employees and management interact with one another within the

organization; in addition they also demonstrate aspect interrelation. For example, communication is an instance of practices and the dissemination of ideas while high workloads and peer influence falls into the category of complicitness (Waters & Bardoal, 2006). Furthermore, the five plausible dimensions for explaining the decision-making process behind parental leave developed by McDonald, Brown and Bradley illustrate the interrelations of Hearn's seven aspects are managerial support, career consequence, organizational time expectations, gender perceptions and co-worker support (McDonald, Brown & Bradley, 2005).

The proposed five dimensions are given in the feminine perspective but still capture the interrelations of Hearn's seven aspects very well. For example, the first dimension of managerial support brings together the idea of Hearn's practice and support aspects by distinguishing between the tangent and in tangent support process of management. The tangent support of having a supportive or favourable parental leave benefit structure in writing reflects the practice of disseminating the promotion work-family balance. However in the tangent negative reactions of managers being informed of a loss of a worker due to parental leave reflects the support aspect (McDonald et al., 2005). The support aspect is reflected in the negative reactions because of the support for a desired masculine behaviour. The new parent is expected to continue working after becoming a parent which diminishes the nurturing home behaviour expected from the family (Runté, 2005).

Career consequence and organizational time expectations are interrelated in Hearn's seven aspects because they both are involved with the interrelationship between the practice and support aspects. There is an interrelationship between the practice and

support aspects because of the possible opposing signals that each of the aspects can give. For example, a company's practice of disseminating a supportive work-family orientation through generous parental leave policies can be counterbalanced by fellow employees and managers' lack of support for parents using the benefit. Career consequences focus on the interrelation between practices and support as it relates to the employee's perspective as to how taking leave will negatively affect their career potential. The dimension of organization time expectation refers to a company's use of time at work as a benchmark to measure an employee's corporate loyalty (Thompson, Beauvais & Lyness, 1999; Waters & Bardoel, 2006).

Gender perceptions focus on the social process of naming men and women as it pertains to implied gender roles. For example, the evidence that points to the perception that work-family balance is a 'women's issue' indicates the taken for granted process of biological identification and other gender-specific practices (Hearn, 2004). However, distinction also plays a factor in this dimension because of the possibility of a man being perceived as less of a man due to exercising rights that are considered "women's issues" (McDonald et al., 2005). The distinction process between men and women is also prevalent in the co-worker support.

Co-worker support refers to the suppression of, or backlash against, potential work-family program uptake rates because of negative perceptions from workers with limited family or outside work obligations (McDonald et al., 2005). Distinction plays a role because of the perceived superiority that workers with low family obligations will have over workers that desire an increased family presence in their lives. Support is also a factor in the fifth dimension because of the lack of consent to take parental leave

displayed by a person's fellow workers. The lack of consent could be given through the use of distinction as a tool for punishment which is evident with co-worker backlash (McDonald et al., 2005).

In this project thesis, one focus is on the decision-making process taken by men when faced with simultaneous work-family investment demands. It investigates what role masculinity and 'self' has on the process of deciding whether or not to exercise parental leave policies available at the University of Lethbridge.

### **3. Research Framework**

#### ***3.1 Feminist Theory and Men***

In 2004, Jeff Hearn published the article, “From Hegemonic Masculinity to the Hegemony of Men” which discusses the double complexity of men as “both a *social category formed by the gender systems and collective and individual agents, often dominated collective and individual agents, of social practices*” (Hearn, 2004, p. 49).

Feminist theory uses this double complexity to categorise men as both a social group and as individual agents to embody the discourse analysis of the multiplicity of oppressions of women in feminist research (Hearn, 2004). The component that this project considers is the pressures men face when making a decision in which the outcome will either challenge or maintain specific social expectations dictated by gender system categorizations. Most importantly, the project applies the seven aspects of the hegemony of men by analysing the pressures that these hegemonic behaviour expectations have on men’s work-family investment decisions.

#### ***3.2 Work-Family Conflict***

There has been extensive research based on Greenhaus and Beutell’s (1985) pioneering work in work-family conflict research. Work-family conflict is separated into the three categories of work-family conflict defined by Greenhaus and Beutell which are time-based, strain-based and behaviour-based conflicts. Behaviour-based conflict is the focus of this research because of the potential conflict between the proposed behaviour expectations that the hegemony of men has on the individual and the individual’s family involvement expectations based on the practices of organizations and women. The

behaviour that the social practice of the hegemony of men expects is for men to be aggressive in maintaining a dominant position in the social hierarchy. With regards to family, this means that the individual should be maintaining the position of provider within the family because of its inherent dominant position in the family structure. However due to pressures of the feminist movement, the Canadian government and the University of Lethbridge have both provided opportunities for fathers to enter into a more nurturing role within the family because of the attempt to develop parental leave legislation and policies that are not gender biased.

### ***3.3 Decision-Making Process***

Lobel (1991) stated that a process that explains “career and family investment” (p. 508) simultaneously has not been elaborated. In this study, the work-family investment decision process of men can also be analysed when investigating the influences that the hegemony of men has on the behaviour of men faced with a work-family decision that challenges dominant social practices. The combination of researching the influences of the hegemony of men and a work-family decision allows for an interpretation as to how a man faced with a work-family decision interprets his surroundings while making a decision. The process of interpreting hegemonic expectations and family expectations may be uncovered even though each individual’s interpretation and decision may be different.

## 4. Methodology

### 4.1 Research Paradigm

For this study I performed the research within the interpretive sociological paradigm (Burrell & Morgan, 1979). The interpretive sociological paradigm is subjective in nature but roots its conclusions in pre-existing theory (see Figure 5.1). Being subjective while grounding my work in established theory allows me to expand theory through explanation of individual consciousness within the realm of the participants rather than the observer (Burrell & Morgan, 1979). In order to immerse myself in the realm of participant, I conducted my interviews with men who have had to go through the work-family decision-making process.

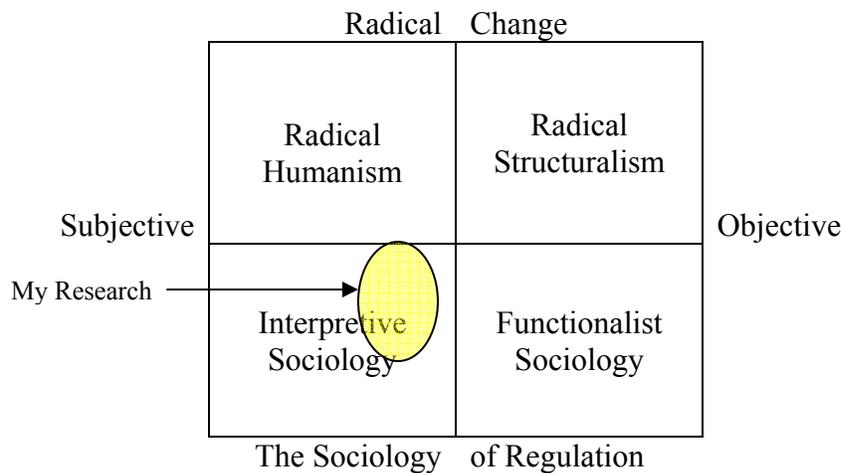


Figure 4.1 Research Paradigm

I feel that this paradigm is the best fit for my research question because of the interpretive paradigm's ability to access the participant's actual— not hypothetical— reasoning for their choices. Gathering data from participants who have gone through the

decision-making process increases the credibility of the study because the events in the decision-making process will be what the participant actually perceived. The interpretive paradigm is also an excellent match for studying Hearn's seven aspects of the hegemony of men. The hegemonic aspects allow for shifting influences on societies and the individuals by incorporating an interrelations aspect within the literature that is subject to different perspectives. Different perspectives on issues such as parental leave decisions will allow for different interpretations of what aspects are important and what aspects are not. Therefore, the interrelations between the aspects should shift depending on the individual's concept of self.

The subjective format used by the interpretive paradigm has allowed me to formulate open-ended questions in order to gather a richer, more in-depth data surrounding the factors considered in the decision-making process of work and family. The data gathered allowed for insights into the decision-making process of other men under the similar circumstances and will allow future researchers to build on the work-family theories being developed.

#### ***4.2 Data Gathering***

I used the Long Interview Method for gathering data (McCracken, 1988). However, I combined the idea of Ethnographic Decision Models (EDMs) format to generate additional structure to the long interview questioning (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). EDMs are often referred to as decision trees or flow charts because they show how people link their criteria (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). "EDMs combine many of the techniques employed in grounded theory and classic content analysis." (Denzin &

Lincoln, 2000, p. 787). I used the EDMs decision tree technique to generate a path of inquiry after the preliminary questioning (see Appendix 1 for details).

McCracken (1988) suggests that the first few questions of the interview should allow the interviewee time to get into the swing of the interview process. After the interviewee is more comfortable with the process, I started the path-finding section of the interview. Structuring the interview by following a given path allowed me to ensure that the key factors behind the interviewee's career and family investment decision process have been captured before I moved on to the greater, and more in-depth detail of the seven aspects of hegemony of men's effects on the decision-making process. Within the interpretive perspective, the structure of the interview ensured that I covered each of the aspects of the hegemony of men which allowed me to embed my work into the literature, but also allowed the participants the opportunity to describe their experiences in a subjective manner. Giving the participant the freedom to express their experiences in an open format also improves the credibility of the data because the interviewee's answers are not restrained or restricted by having to choose a response within a predetermined answer set.

The preliminary demographic questions that I used before shifting to the EDMs structure are shown in Appendix 1.

The long interview method uses an open question format to obtain information from the interviewee. The open question allows the interviewee to answer in their own words without having to fit their responses into any predetermined limitations that yes or no questions induce. As shown in the EDM in Appendix 2, a simple yes or no answer cannot be used to articulate what factors caused the subject to make certain decisions.

The essential part of the long interview method is to probe the respondent's initial answers in order to gain additional knowledge as to why specific decisions were made or why the respondent feels the way they do about a topic.

As an interviewer, I ensured that I did not give the interviewee the feeling of being judged by monitoring nonverbal communication, such as body language. In fact, I did my best to encourage the interviewee to elaborate as much as possible without fear of being judged. Special attention was taken to watch for signs of impression management, topic avoidance, deliberate distortion, minor misunderstandings and incomprehension of the question which allowed me to adapt the conversation in order to make the interviewee more comfortable with the interview process. I organised a simple interview guide, shown in Appendix 3, to ensure that all points of interest in my study were covered. Probes were also added to help with any difficulties with the progression of the interview during lags in the conversation; however most respondents did not require probes other than for clarification.

#### ***4.3 Sample Selection***

The selection of subjects was based on gender, position, and the subject's opportunity to exercise the University of Lethbridge's parental leave policies. I looked to interview fathers which limited my choice to the male population at the university. Position refers to the subject's job at the university. I specifically searched for faculty, rather than employees in any other positions, in order to reduce the expected number of interviews required for saturation. I separated faculty into two distinct categories: those that are tenured and untenured during the work-family investment decision. I created this separation in order to highlight the distinction aspect of masculinity and its effect on the

interrelations of Hearn's seven aspects. Opportunity to exercise the university's parental leave benefits was determined by the faculty member's ability to qualify in accordance to section 35.02.1 (a-f) guidelines in the faculty handbook (University of Lethbridge Faculty Association, 2001). The parental leave benefits at the University of Lethbridge came into effect July 1, 2001. This means that all interviewees must have had a child between July 1, 2001 and April 1, 2007. Interviewees with spouses due beyond April 1, 2007 will not qualify for my study because the parental leave benefits were under negotiation and have been changed (University of Lethbridge Faculty Association, 2001). Keeping the participants focused on one parental leave benefits plan increases the reliability of the data because of the reduced opportunity for blame shifts in parental leave experiences on having different parental leave opportunities between subjects.

As well as for convenience, professors were also selected because of the similarities that academics and other professions have regarding their human capital investment. The similarities in human capital investment allows for an increased transferability to other professions. Human capital investment refers to the education and training involved with being able to acquire and/or maintain a position (Becker, 2007).

The relationship between lower and higher distinction men is similar to the power relationships that women are faced with when entering professional positions (Lupton 2006; Runté & Mills, 2004). Focusing on two categories of faculty allowed for a greater understanding of the influence that the distinction aspect has on the work-family investment decisions made by men in high distinction roles.

I looked for 12 to 15 subjects to interview for this project. "For many projects, eight respondents will be perfectly sufficient." (McCracken, 1988, p. 17). However, 10

interviews were analysed out of the 12 interviews I was able to perform because of problems during the transcription process. Twelve interviews were performed for this study to ensure that the “criteria of ‘saturation’ (i.e., new data fit into the categories already devised)” is met (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p. 520). Saturation of data happens when the data no longer provides any new information to the analysis because the data has already been previously categorised. Saturation of data was accomplished after the analysis of the first seven interviews; however, I continued with the data analysis to produce a greater variety of quotations in order to help demonstrate the strength of the conclusions and observations.

#### ***4.4 Data Analysis***

The completed interviews were professionally transcribed verbatim. The interviews were then coded by what area of interest that the interview examined in order to pinpoint trends and themes of the discourse. Atlas was the analytical tool I used to organize the data. Atlas is a computer program designed for qualitative research that also allows for quantitative adaptation.

I used some tools to help ensure that the data gathering and analysis techniques did not interfere with the stories being told. The first tool I used was the self-as-instrument process (McCracken, 1988). The self-as-instrument process demands one of two techniques in observing and analysing data. The first technique involves matching “one’s experience for ideas and actions that the respondent has described” (McCracken, 1988, p. 19) in order to relate to the meanings behind the story. The second technique is the building of understanding when there are no matching experiences between myself and the interviewee. The building of an understanding essentially is the process of

learning to see things in other people's shoes through complete acceptance of the resonance's answers as complete truth (McCracken, 1988). For example, I was able to relate and match my experiences of becoming a father to a new child during conversations pertaining to the fatherhood experience. However, I had to step out into my respondent's shoes when discussing the work-family investment choice and accept their perceptions as complete truth because my experience as a father did not require a similar work-family decision.

The act of reflection reduced the chance of misinterpreting the data because it allowed me to confirm what the participant was experiencing during their decision-making process. Reducing the chance of misinterpreting the participant's experiences increases the credibility of the data because I was able to recognise any bias that I have. I also relied on my supervisor, Dr. Runté, for her interpretations on the data to ensure that any internal bias that I have did not cause me to jump to conclusions. Demonstrating to my supervisor how I interpreted the data required me to reflect on my involvement in the data gathering process and tested the credibility of the results. Dr. Runté's participation also enhanced the confirmability of the project because she was able to question my conclusions which forced me to audit my data for potential bias or distortions.

## 5. Findings

### 5.1 Social Process

Hearn (2004) suggests that the social process of the hegemony of men is “the taken-for-granted categorization of men through biological and often medical examination” (p. 60). This suggests that a child is granted certain rights and privileges in society based on whether they have a penis at birth. One right and privilege that is assumed for male newborns is that they will be able to attain positions of power within society without the challenges of role conflict. In fact, it is expected that males will pursue a greater distinction through achievements outside the home. Examples supporting this expectation are demonstrated when my interviewees are asked about the view that society takes on men who stay home to help raise their children.

Yeah. And if it's the man on the leave and the woman still working my hunch is it's 50/50 on the diaper changing, so I think it's really rare for the Mr. Mom that does 90 or 100 percent of the diaper changing.

I think then the pressure is on the - the question for the father is, Okay, couldn't you get a job? Were you fired? I don't know, there must be – society thinks there's something wrong.

In the first quote, the interviewee categorises changing diapers as women's work by labelling a man that does the majority of diaper changing as a “Mr. Mom”. The reference to the female gender-loaded ‘mom’ category shows that there is an implied right for men to not participate in domestic child caring role. This is further supported by the second quote's reference that society perceives that there is “something wrong” when a male chooses the domestic role as a parent over the role as family provider. However, not all interviewees would agree, and some would instead state that the role of men in the family is changing.

Comments made by some of the participants express that they believe that the provider role for men in the family is old fashioned and that the role of men in the family is changing. An example of this is:

Go back to my dad's day and he wasn't allowed into the delivery room. I mean, that was some mysterious thing that happened over there and the thought of him taking time off to be with his kid, that was just a non-starter right? I mean, you might as well have asked him if he was going to run naked through downtown. I mean, why would I do that? It was just a complete non-starter, right, to my generation where it's an idea, and then the younger guys who I think a much higher percentage are expected to put up. You know, what the research is telling us is all dads now think they're equal partners, and in fact they're about 25 percent. They're maybe doing a quarter, right? But from zero to a quarter, that's a big shift.

Yeah, the old fashioned picture of the man earning the money and then spending some quality time with the kids after work and on the weekends – I think it's still there in society. Society is changing in a good thing. More and more fathers are taking parental leave. But I think the parental leave thing for fathers is, yeah, is seen very positively as a whole. I think it would be more – society would object more if I would have quit my job and said, Okay, I'm a stay at home dad and my wife was just working. I think that's still a gigantic step and I think society is frowning upon that.

Even though it is recognized that the social process regarding men in the home is changing, both of these interviewees acknowledged that society has not changed enough to be fully accepting of the stay-at-home male parent. The question then becomes what in the social process of men has changed to allow for men to participate and be accepted as a participant as a nurturing member of the family. Most interviewees state that the main male role in the family that is accepted by society is to be a supportive to their spouse.

For example:

I would say in the house if I was honest. I would say doing the small – I would say more menial types of things around the house. I was doing the vacuuming, I was washing the windows, I'd do a lot more of that stuff than I would normally do, I have to admit, cause my wife was always – she was basically completely dedicated, devoted to our son's first couple months; that's feeding, that's doing the mom thing, which dad's can – we're just not part of that and that's fine, but it was a challenging period and so I think my wife did need some moral support

and, you aren't a terrible mother and if our son is crying it's not necessarily your fault and – it's just basically keeping the family unit on a reasonable even keel.

Allow the father to stay home in a supporting role. And if the mother's not – you get into issues of, you know, should both mother and father be able to claim parental leave, but certainly in cases like ours where the mother's not going to claim it, allow the father to claim it and stay home and – he's not likely to be the primary care giver but he can really, really be valuable to the family. I think it would have been a huge benefit to my wife to have me stay home that first year with the second child and be there cooking and cleaning and looking after our little boy, our firstborn and it would have made things tremendously easy for her – not tremendously easy but tremendously easier for her if I could have done that.

However, does this shifting perspective of the man's role in the family indicate a shift in the role of the male parent or a shift in the definition of men's original provider role? Both of the above quotes indicate that the father should be choosing the parental leave option in order to participate in the family home. However, both also indicate that the father should have more of a background role and support the mother as the nurturer. The background role includes maintaining the house by doing the chores and providing stability in the home through moral support. This would indicate that most men still do not view themselves as the caregiver in the family, but as a provider of stability through home maintenance and spousal moral support. The inclusion of home maintenance and spousal moral support does not indicate a shift in the social process regarding a man's role as provider in the family but it does indicate an expanded definition for the term provider. Interviewees use the expanded definition of provider as an indicator for change instead of a shift in gender roles due to biological reasoning.

But I then took the primary role as much as it's possible for dad, cause let's face it, it's really always the mom in the end. I don't have breasts, it's not gonna – the whole nursing thing takes priority and the kids bonded differently, but I certainly did my best to be there.

Again, she was going to be the primary caregiver. She was breastfeeding the child so it made sense obviously.

The act of breastfeeding a child is thought of as the ultimate form of childcare which automatically grants the mother the status of primary caregiver or nurturer within the family unit. However the discourse of ‘primary caregiver’ can be interpreted in several ways. For example, the dominant North American interpretation of family and family care is different from the Asian, Central and South American interpretation of family and family care. In North America, the predominant family unit is nuclear in format which means that the family unit is reduced to its central core of mother, father and child; whereas other cultures have more of an extended family definition which includes grandparents, aunts and uncles. This shift in the family definition allows for a shift in the interpretation of the discourse of primary caregiver. Primary caregiver role can be interpreted as the extended family unit which includes the support function of providing for the extended family.

Pressures or expectations that the social process aspect has on the subjects’ parental leave decisions are highlighted through the reactions of fathers faced with the competing social expectations of different cultures regarding the definition of family. An example of this reaction is importing a familiar culture into the home or exporting the family base back to the parents’ original culture to support familiar social practice expectations. Surrounding themselves with their cultural social processes is done to reduce conflict between differing cultural expectations for the provider role.

When you come to [Country of Origin] the family takes over, as I told you before. So naturally her family jumped in, they started working and they were more than happy to take care of the child, which reduced my need or – me being around. My presence was less important by that time.

And then our mothers both from [Country of Origin] came over. We had a week or maximum of 10 days in between where we basically worked full-time [laugh]

without our mothers here, or one of our mothers here, and then basically I got the mornings at work and then my wife got the afternoons.

Hearn's broad macro definition of the social process aspect does not account for cultural differences between individual decision-makers (Hearn, 2004). However, conflicting cultural pressures is clearly an important factor in the work-family decision-making process. In most cases, the parent desires the leave to be able to modify cultural expectations and pressure caused by having competing expectations for the provider role. These competing provider expectations demonstrate an *intra-relationship* within the social process aspect based on cultural differences. As I define it, an intra-relationship is the relationship between subcategories of an aspect within the same aspect which is distinct from the interrelations aspect which encompasses the relationship between separate aspects. Such intra-relationships often capture the dynamics, sometimes conflicting, within an aspect.

In both cases above, the fathers were able to shift their role as providers to the more traditional model because of the reduction of need in the home. The reduction of need in the home allowed for the father in quote one and both parents in quote two to focus on reducing or limiting the detrimental impact that parental leave may have on their research careers. Limiting the negative impact of taking leave improves their chances to provide for their families in the future. However, the desire to work while on leave is not limited to those dealing with competing cultural expectations.

Well work wasn't turned completely off because I did, as I was saying I would come in to talk to the graduate students. I did kind of do a little bit of reading and writing at home during the down times so it wasn't a complete – I wasn't flicking the switch completely off.

But the parental leave allowed me the flexibility of – I could pop into work and do things that were critical but I didn't have major commitments at the time in terms

of teaching or in terms of my research or especially administration. So it gave me the flexibility to do – I didn't come in very often but when I did I really needed to. And so the leave gave me that flexibility.

The above quotes are from two different faculty members who both took leave because they agreed with the idea of men being more involved in the family home. However, both faculty members had difficulty completely removing themselves from their work environment through pressures of work obligations such as responsibilities to graduate students and administrative duties. The quotes also illustrate the interviewees' reluctance to go to work due to fears of cheating the parental leave system by working while on leave. Both justify their involvement at work by assuring me that they only worked "a little bit" or only when it was "critical". The belief that they are cheating the system may have developed because of the North American nuclear family definition. The nuclear family definition limits the roles of nurturer and provider to two parents which makes it difficult for fathers to justify removing themselves from the home in order to reduce the negative impacts parental leave has on their careers.

The pressure to minimize negative impacts on the career, such as falling behind in research and administrative duties, may be one of the main sources behind the consistent accusations that men are only taking parental leave as a mini-sabbatical in order to get ahead in work but also highlights the competitive men's role as provider. However, the rules for being the 'best' provider have been changed.

I think there's still some traditional notions and masculinity that are at play in the ocean of the ideal man, a certain competence and strength in terms of career, in terms of general know-how, but also there's a sensitivity and caring that their willingness to take over some of the more traditional, domestic duties, cooking – I like to cook so that's a big part of my – yeah, domestic duties. And I love all the time spent with kids too, so yeah, maybe [inaudible – pos 339] notion of some kind of balance.

You need to be everything. You need to be a provider, you need to be your wife's best friend and you need to keep the home fires burning, you've got to be a performer at work, you know, I guess in some ways you gotta present this sort of aura of someone who works hard but plays hard and I guess has some outside interests etc. it's basically the complete package.

The two quotes above help to demonstrate what the new expectations are for the provider role. It is no longer sufficient to be the economic provider in order to gain prestige as a father. The provider function now includes providing support and performing domestic labour such as washing dishes. The expanded provider definition is also bridging the gap between the traditional nurturing and provider roles. For example, fathers can use their new provider role to help out with the kids when needed as a way to support the nurturing parent. This allows the father to gain even greater prestige by being able to state that they were able to fulfill their provider requirements while having to divide their time as a nurturer.

## ***5.2 Distinction***

The aspect of distinction is defined by Hearn (2004) as the “system of distinctions and categorizations between different forms of men and men's practices to women, children and other men” (p. 60). This implies that men will adjust their behaviour and decisions based on the impact it will have on their prospects to gain distinction in the future. However, it does not suggest that men will consider potential impacts on the distinction of others in their social circle before initiating certain behaviours.

Uh, yeah, of course it was issue to take parental leave because of the research career that we both have and one of us taking a whole year would have been a burden for our professional career and that wouldn't have been good, so we basically said that we would share the time. When I say burden I don't want to sound too negative – it was a burden on the career but it was of course nice to spend it with our daughter, but taking a whole year, it's really difficult for – like you're basically shutting down your research and we both have a really active research career. The research group of my wife was actually quite a lot bigger

than mine so [it was] easier for me to take more leave in addition to the 17 weeks then it would have been for her.

Supportive that he'd help out his family, and his wife has a career that she can pursue in art restoration so she can pursue it in a sort of a workshop at the house but she needs the time to do it, so especially he was able to allow her to pursue that while he took care of the kids full time. I think people thought that was nice and progressive and a good idea for him and the family.

Both of the interviewees considered the potential impacts that taking leave would have on their careers before making the decision. However, they also considered their spouse's careers when making the decision. The first interviewee makes a point of highlighting his wife's career in order for me to understand why his involvement in the home was important even though he saw a potential for damaging his own distinctiveness within his research community. It seems that the interviewee is willing to reduce his distinctiveness for the benefit of another. In spite of this, the ability to state that you are associated intimately with a much more distinctive figure may outweigh any potential damaging effects to their own prestige.

Some interviewees' willingness to tolerate potential negative impacts on their career by taking leave is reduced when they viewed their position as being more distinctive than their spouses'.

In fact my wife had the more important job, I was a student for a while and if we had kids earlier I would likely have been the principal care giver in spite the exigencies of breastfeeding, you know, but just with this change I think it makes sense that we at least, especially in our baby's best interest's that we keep – not that money matters the most, it doesn't, but we thought it was important to keep that salary going.

Maybe your wife is a high-powered lawyer or something like that and a lot of time off the job is actually a very detriment to that career. That career is very central to the main family income or just to her sense of well being and self-worth and all that and so sort of balancing her leave more towards six months or something, an additional six months would work very well in that kind of situation. My own family, the situation is that my wife's parallel career doesn't

have that kind of pressures of –my income is the larger one and so you have to [when] staying home for that full year.

In both cases, the interviewees suggest that they would be willing to consider their leave if their spouses had high-powered positions. However, both state that it is more important to maintain their own careers because their spouses do not have the ability to contribute to the family distinction through a high powered career of their own. In fact, the focus shifts to their ability to provide in the home as well as for the home due to the flexibility of having a distinctive faculty position. An example of this thought process is shown in the following quotes:

Of course I do have the luxury of being a professor. I know that I have a big swath of summer off and I can have quasi leave, and I have flexibility in my schedule and though research does consume a lot of my time, I'm trying to catch up right now – there's some things I'm behind in. You know, I think there is greater leeway to strike a balance.

I suppose some of the flexibility of a professor's life is that while you a busy you're not 9:00 to 5:00. You can fill in and help out in childcare and so I felt that my lifestyle allowed me to be engaged enough with the kids, whereas my wife's job is 8:30 in the morning until close to 5:00 at night. So if she's at that she's really as away from the two children all day if she wasn't on leave.

The maintenance and building of distinction requires a constant expense of resources. The expense of human capital is realized through career and reputation building in order to enhance their distinction within the community. Human capital investment refers to the education and training involved with being able to acquire and/or maintain a position (Becker, 2007). For example:

I guess my tenure application could have been postponed but I didn't really feel like doing that, so I wanted to move towards that tenure application in my fifth year at the university and that was the first year that our child was born. So that was probably some influence as well, just that desire to remain getting those final things published and getting all that application together.

If I was a normal faculty member with a normal teaching load and I didn't have the administrative obligations sure, I wouldn't have hesitated to go with the normal procedure and also take a full leave, the full period.

The two quotes above are from faculty members at different stages of their careers. The first quote is from a faculty member who was junior at the time of their parental leave decision and the second quote is from a faculty member in a senior position within their department. One can see how the effect of human capital influences their decision regarding work family decisions such as taking parental leave. The junior faculty members believe that there is a pressure to publish in order to be granted tenure which influences them to forgo a parental leave and the senior member's focus is on their ability to maintain their administrative duties in order to preserve their senior title. However, the maintenance and competition for greater distinction between different levels of faculty remains the same. The junior faculty member is not willing to risk their years of investing in an education towards gaining a professorship to take leave while the more senior member is not willing to risk their investment towards gaining a higher status position within the university. In fact, both junior and senior faculty members are so focused on the competition of the distinction game that they both agree that the parental leave policy is vulnerable to misuse by faculty members trying to cheat their way to more distinctive careers.

I do see guys around me who are – they mostly seem to be aware that it's there but whether they choose to take it – you got the few guys that take it and the rumour is that they took the time to be with their kids but they weren't. They went and did research, they went and did private consulting, they went and did some other aspect of their career and just found that it made space for them in their work time so that they could exploit something else.

One colleague suggested it would be a good way to slow down the tenure clock. [laugh] You can take leave and they could suggest ways you could continue to work on your research [laugh] while getting an additional year to make tenure. I didn't think I needed that. I thought it would be fine and it was fine. And it didn't

strike me as a particularly, you know, that's not the proper way; if you're going to take parental leave then you do it to take care of one or more children and do that full time.

The accusation or suggestion that others are using the parental leave policy as a way to gain an advantage in the promotion of their careers and distinction was prominent throughout the interviews. The practice of questioning a father's intentions when they opt to take the benefit leads to Hearn's (2004) third aspect in the hegemony of men.

### ***5.3 Practices***

Hearn (2004) defines practice as the dissemination of the agendas of men. Dissemination practices are "in the media, the state, religion and so on" (p. 60). An example of this within the parental leave decision is the expectation that policy will influence more faculty members to take leave.

So the policy that it has about the parental leave is consistent with the values it's trying to promote in the society. And so I think the Federal Government, I think it's a Federal Government rule, I think it's being consistent with the values it is trying to promote. I don't think the Federal Government and the government machinery has done its job in trying to take into consideration some of the considerations of the hiccups that the society will go through to accept it, which is fine. It's – that's the issue of any new regulation that government imposes and society has to adjust to it.

If we didn't have a package like we do at the university, if you really had to rely just on the Employment Insurance portion of support it would – I mean you might be able to take a short one but it wouldn't be something you could do for any length of time for most people I would think, so we're in a very – I'm always very clear when I talk to people that, Yes the university professors work hard but we have some tremendous privileges too.

These two respondents discuss the influences policy had on their decision to exercise the parental leave benefits. The first quote discusses policy at the governmental level and its ability to gradually affect the Canadian outlook of men taking leave while the second quote discusses the effect of the university policy at a more micro level. At the

micro level, there is a greater debate as to the role of the university when promoting a shift in work-family decisions of male faculty. This is highlighted in the criticisms that male faculty members have when trying to exercise their benefits. The interpretation of the parental leave policy used by the interviewees caused conflict during the work family decision-making process. For example:

I didn't take additional parental leave at that time because to do so I would have had to basically lie through my teeth, because to be eligible for it you have to be the primary care giver and I wasn't. And so I would have had to make up some kind of story, which has been done by people at this institution.

He just told me, you know, you should just go talk to them. You may be surprised, and he pointed out that this phrase they use, primary care giver, that on some level it's – they can't pry into your affairs to the point of – I mean there's a limit to – so effectively if you declare yourself to be the primary care giver you are the primary care giver as far as they're concerned. So the – yeah, I guess he just pointed out that this was technical language that was designed to exclude having two people take their leave at the same time. And once he pointed that out it became sort of obvious that he was probably right and I probably should look into this a little harder.

In the second quote, an intra-relationship within the practices aspect is highlighted when applying the aspect to the work-family decision-making process. For example, the practice aspect's subcategories of written and non-written practices created for the parental leave analysis have been demonstrated to work both in conjunction and in conflict with one another. The second quote demonstrates positive intra-relation between written and non-written practices because it demonstrates how a colleague's support for exercising the available benefit allowed for the interviewee to feel comfortable with taking a parental leave. However the third quote below shows how written and non-written practices can conflict with one another to cause the interviewee to feel disrespected because his intentions as a parent were challenged even though it is his legal right to exercise the benefit.

It does because it tells me that, again, people don't respect your decision. I think this could be, which is what I think you are trying to get at in the study is maybe it's hard for them to fathom why men can take, are taking parental leave. I think – men take parental leave so that they can do their own work and not to take care of the child. I think that is influencing their opinion I think. It does affect my opinion of that comment because it tells me, other than the respect part, that whenever I say something they are going to doubt my intentions. And let's say I try to ask for parental leave, they are going to look at me with some suspicions.

A conflict between the written and non-written practices of an organization has the possibility of increasing the behaviour-based conflict for an individual. The father is not able to determine how society expects him to act as a father because he is unable to confidently interpret the conflicting signals of the organization. In the second quote, the interviewee states that the written policy allows him to spend more time in the home as a parent; however the actions of his colleagues made him feel that people still do not believe that male faculty members are able to let go of their roles as professors and financial providers.

Within the nuclear family perspective held by some of the subjects of the study, the term 'primary caregiver' is being interpreted as only allowing one main source of care. This reasoning automatically excludes male parents from taking leave based on a biological reasoning because the mother is assumed to have the primary position. As stated in the social process aspect discussions, breastfeeding is considered the ultimate form of care which most men feel that they cannot compete with when determining who can act in the primary caregiver role. The decision regarding the primary caregiver clause then focuses on how to use other leave policies as a loophole to get the leave within the rules so that the father can also participate in the home. The practice of finding other policies outside of the parental leave policy to support the parents' belief of family involvement brings about accusations of cheating the parental leave system.

I get the feeling that everybody says, You know, I spend a lot of time – but I have a feeling that if you actually timed how long it took someone to change diapers you would know how many diapers they've changed and so, yeah, a couple of people I want to sort of put the baby in front of them and say, Change the diaper, and see if they really could. Interviewer: What do you think they were doing? Answer: Well I know one person in our area was using it as a sort of mini sabbatical...

It does because it tells me that, again, people don't respect your decision. I think this could be, which is what I think you are trying to get at in the study is maybe it's hard for them to fathom why men can take, are taking parental leave. I think – men take parental leave so that they can do their own work and not to take care of the child. I think that is influencing their opinion I think. It does affect my opinion of that comment because it tells me, other than the respect part, that whenever I say something they are going to doubt my intentions. And let's say I try to ask for parental leave, they are going to look at me with some suspicions.

The formation of a suspicious work environment regarding the intentions of people exercising their leave benefits created a backlash effect against the parental leave policy itself. This backlash effect creates a conflict between the written practices of the university and the informal practices of organizational culture. For example, the university policy gives the opportunity for men to take leave and helps to create a feeling that the university is trying to be a family friendly organization. However, the suspicious atmosphere created by some members of the organization counters the intent of the policy. This demonstrates the practices definition into two parts which are written and non-written practices. Written practices are any dissemination of ideas through written policies by government, business or any other influential organization. Unwritten practices are demonstrated through the dissemination of ideas through the behaviour of influential individuals which can support or hinder written policies.

The initiative of some faculty members has reduced or removed the suspicious environment in some of the University of Lethbridge's faculties. In this case, the

acceptance of a shift in organizational thought through positive reinforcement has created a positive work environment for family orientated faculty members.

Yes. It was – the environment was extremely supportive. They thought this was a great thing to have available. I wasn't the only one actually. We had a real little baby boom up here so there were two of us taking parental leave; two male faculty members taking parental leave last year, so there wasn't – I mean people were really – because it's still pretty new, people were really trying to puzzle it out and so I didn't get – I mean I got encouragement to go talk to HR from at least one, perhaps two faculty members to help figure out whether I was eligible or not, but there wasn't a lot of good information available locally because people were really trying to figure out what was and wasn't within the rules. The reverse half is after I took my leave I talked to a member in another department who didn't think he was eligible, who was in a similar situation to what I was and subsequently found out that just as I was, he was eligible too, and he took leave.

I thought since my wife wasn't working she would be the primary care giver and if I wasn't the primary care giver then I wasn't eligible for leave. That was what I thought. It was actually one of my colleagues that came down the hall and we were – the timing of our kids birth were very similar and my colleague was going on leave and said, What are you doing not going on leave? Of course you're eligible. And one thing led to the other, and my dean is very supportive of these kinds of things; he's a family guy, and so I went and had a very candid talk with him and he said, you should do it.

The two previous quotes are examples of how acceptance within a group can not only support a work family initiative of an organization, but can cause faculty members to feel obligated to exercise their rights as new parents. In fact, the faculty members then shifted their attention to interpreting the intent of the policy rather than the actual letter of the law. In the first quotation, the interviewee suggests that there was a real effort to “puzzle out” the policy to figure out how new fathers could be eligible within the primary caregiver clause. This involved looking at how other faculty members approached the primary caregiver clause in order to qualify for their parental leave benefits.

#### ***5.4 Complicitness***

Complicitness, defined by Hearn (2004) as the “The identification of the most widespread, repeated forms of men’s practices” (p. 61) is the replication of those behaviours that are most central to the construction of men (Hearn, 2004). This means that men identify what are acceptable behaviours for men by gauging what other men are doing around them in comparison with themselves. A demonstration of the identification of the most widespread practices in the parental leave decision is the interpretation as to whether a department is supportive or not with regards to the parental leave policy.

The thing is all these are; I think all these behaviours or comments I think are a reflection of people not accepting completely. First of all there’s pure lack of awareness among many people that you can take parental leave that is one thing. They were learning through me that you can take parental leave; even males can take parental leave. And then there’s the issue of attitude, that there was less accepting or they were getting to accept it. So both these factors, I think were influencing their behaviour. So eventually I think it will calm down, those comments, because it will just become a part of the routine. In fact there might be a question, are you going on a parental leave if you have a child, kind of question. So eventually when there’s more awareness and there is change in attitude I think people will be more accepting.

I mean, and again you have to remember I think we were all getting conditioned to babies because of the baby boom we had, right? One of my colleagues was in the same situation where he’d come in once in a while to talk to students or something pushing a baby stroller. In fact, he’s back as I am, back at work full time now but he still sometimes brings the baby stroller when there have been hiccups with childcare arrangements. So we’re very used to seeing babies here now and everybody enjoys them.

The identification of the most widespread activities in both cases takes place by identifying their Faculty’s acceptance of men taking parental leave. In both of the above quotations, the interviewees talked about the acceptance or supportiveness of their departments based on the frequency of previous parental leave claims within their department or Faculty. Both come to the conclusion that the greater the number of male

faculty members exercising their leave benefits equalled a greater chance of Faculty acceptance of the leave process.

The frequency of occurrence measurement as calculated by the interviewees suggests that complicitness is the measurement tool used to gauge the local culture or social process as well as the effectiveness and acceptance of written practices such as the university's parental leave policy. This is shown by the interviewees' desire to compare themselves to past fathers, such as their own fathers when asked what they viewed as society's model of the ideal man.

You need to be everything. You need to be a provider, you need to be your wife's best friend and you need to keep the home fires burning, you've got to be a performer at work, you know, I guess in some ways you gotta present this sort of aura of someone who works hard but plays hard and I guess has some outside interests etc. it's basically the complete package. These days it seems that I think there's more pressure – I mean for instance in my dad's case he never changed a diaper and pretty much was working most of the time, and lots of out of town trips and things. I don't think that's unusual but these days I think there's more of a society pressure to be everything; to be the provider at home and to yet make your million dollars and live in the big house and – I guess if I was to read the Calgary newspaper and that was the headline I guess you'd be everything to everybody.

We live in academia, we're more sensitive to the critique of gender roles, particularly if you have some humanities and social sciences, so the ideal seems to be shifting towards more of a balance of sensitivity and caring, family, the ideal man is not as quantitative as we imagined, at least the traditional sort of head of the household was, but that's already shifted by my generation. My mother had a job that was probably more remunerative as my father although they both had very good careers. So yeah, I can break it down to – [laugh] sensitive, caring – the ideal man – well nonetheless being a kind of a competent and career orientated, so kind of balance I think of what society's notion of an ideal man.

The complicitness aspect is also variable according to the interviewees' cultures which indicate that men's comparisons are done at a cultural level within Hearn's seven aspects for the hegemony of men. For example:

Yeah, mainly men don't take care of families in my society. So the wives will usually do that, take care of the family if for some reason the wives are not available they usually look for an auntie or a family member that will come and help.

Yeah, my first reaction is which, what aspect of society because there are so many different views of males and depends on who you talk to. I'm from the west coast and the prevailing view out there is very different from the prevailing view in southern Alberta. It depends on religious – people's religious views, it depends on their social – their educational background, it depends on lots of things. I'm not sure I could characterize what society as a whole – I've seen too many different groups with too many different views.

The previous quotes illustrate that the interviewees perform a segmentation of society before answering questions regarding the role of men in the family. The first quote shows how the interviewee claims ownership to a particular segment of society when talking about the role of men in the family. The second quote is a demonstration of the process of segmenting society into sections to which a man can compare himself.

The measurement of the social process aspect along with the process of gauging the acceptance of written practices, highlighted by the backlash effect in the practices section, suggests that complicitness may not be a distinct aspect in this particular decision. In fact, most interviewees seem to use complicitness as an *interrelation* that is widely used as a tool for gauging the interaction between the cultural shifts within the social process aspect and practices.

### ***5.5 Contradiction***

Contradiction is defined as the most “natural(ized), ordinary, normal and most taken-for-granted practices to women, children and other men and their contradictory...meanings – rather than the depiction of the most culturally valued ideal” (Hearn, 2004, p. 61). The definition refers to the contradiction between the actions of

men and the ideal, or most desired, form of men's behaviour. However, the study found that the interviewees were very careful to ensure that their actions reflected their own beliefs as to how a father should behave and that their beliefs were largely contradictory to mainstream beliefs which were themselves seen as anything but 'ideal.'

Yeah, if you took me now and I had another baby, God help us – in any other situation I'd still want that leave, right? Absolutely. I'd be a huge advocate for it. I push colleagues I see and say, take it.

Oh, definitely. I completely think that was an essential thing to do for me and the family; to have more bonding with the children. So to leave everything up to the woman, I don't see that as a good partnership.

The two examples above show how both men have a strong conviction about taking leave in order to be involved in the family bonding process. In fact, the first quote shows how the interviewee's convictions drive him to ensure others would do the same. However, conflict can occur between the discourse of father and the discourse of family. In some cases, the interviewee interprets the term 'family' as a nuclear group of mother, father and child(ren) with both parents sharing the child-rearing responsibility. With this interpretation of the term 'family', the term 'primary caregiver' implies an either-or scenario in the decision-making process. The either-or scenario means that the parents must choose who is going to be designated primary caregiver and therefore be allowed to exercise the benefit. For example:

But would I like to have had that [Primary Caregiver] restriction removed so that I could have taken time off and been there with my wife, absolutely! That would have been a huge benefit. I mean it was hard on her with a two year old plus a newborn. If I could have taken leave and been there with her I would have done so like that. If I could have seen a legitimate way to do it.

I was very much told that I had to state that I was the principal caregiver. I don't know what that means, if there's a way to get around it, and in a sense I'm really not since my wife is because she's not working at the moment, and I think that that's something I could have maybe much more deeply considered applying for.

In both cases, the interviewees apply the nuclear family template to the primary caregiver clause and come to the conclusion that they do not qualify for the parental leave benefits. The first quote demonstrates the frustration of trying to be part of the family while staying within the rules and boundaries of their interpretation of the leave benefit. The increased frustration of trying to balance work and family without being able to exercise a desired benefit generates dissatisfaction with the university and its policy makers.

You certainly don't really get a sense that anybody gives a shit about you. You feel like it doesn't work to increase your loyalty but it's an institution, it's a bureaucracy and I've been here quite a few years, I'm kind of used to it now.

I was confused and I was misinformed in fact about – I thought since my wife wasn't working she would be the primary care giver and if I wasn't the primary care giver then I wasn't eligible for leave. That was what I thought.

Confusion about how to interpret the term 'primary caregiver' in the parental leave benefit gives the impression that the university does not care for the individual. The resulting confusion of vague practices undermines the ability of a father to behave in ways that are contradictory to the hegemonic expectations of an ideal father. The second quote above illustrates how a father's assumptions about the primary caregiver clause caused him to relinquish his rights to exercise the parental leave benefit. A dehumanized bureaucratic system being involved with personal family affairs within the university becomes the target for anger so that the interviewee is able to ensure that his actions are in line with his belief towards family involvement. However, the university is not the only influential body that is required to be viewed as supportive in order for men to exercise the parental leave benefit.

## ***5.6 Support***

The support aspect is defined by Hearn (2004) as “the question of how women may differently support certain practices of men, and subordinate other practices of men” (p. 61). This definition suggests that women support the traits of masculinity, and men’s hegemony, through “consent” (Hearn, 2004). Examples of women consenting to allow the traditions of the male provider role in the home to continue during the parental leave decision are:

Oh someone doesn’t stay home, the kids aren’t as well off – it’s not necessarily proved but my wife had a stressful job and very stressful couple of years and she wanted some time off, and she’s thinking about going back to work maybe when the baby’s about two years old and that’s what she really, really wanted. And so it worked okay for us.

I got to say we probably, you know, it was just always a kind of given that she would like to take the leave and she’s like to take the maximum now allowable, which is a year [according to] paternal leave legislation, I guess it’s federal and provincial if I can get this right. So yeah, I wouldn’t even say there was much of a conversation, just that she would – she wanted the year and that fit.

In both of the above quotes, the interviewees’ spouses are supporting the hegemonic belief that men should be in the provider role with regards to their family. Their desire to maximize their time at home confirms the predetermined social roles of the mother which contribute to the solidification of the provider role of the father. In some cases however, the support of the hegemony of men is confused by the mixed messages that are created by changes in the views of the women around them.

It surprises me because on one hand women keep on saying they want equality and I’m all for it, but then when men take parental leave I think you should support it.

After she was back that she had a lot of guilt that she didn’t stay at home longer and that she basically felt that she was judged as a bad mother that she doesn’t stay at home. Maybe you read the article in the Globe and Mail too, a couple of – a month ago or something that was about women, mothers. Some stay home,

some quit their jobs, some basically continue with their job, and that basically everybody is judging the other person [laugh] or feeling that the other people are judging them, but the people who go back to work basically think they're judged as bad mothers.

The first quote is discussing the mixed messages that the interviewee is receiving from women regarding parental roles between genders. The interviewee felt that he was not encouraged by the female faculty members around him when he decided to take parental leave, i.e. he received implicit support for hegemony through their lack of acceptance of parental leave. The second quote discusses the issues with his wife's guilt with sharing the leave where the support for hegemony was more explicit. The two above quotes also demonstrate how the interviewees separate the support aspect into two categories of spouse and other women. The separation of the support aspect might create the possibility of an intra-relationship between the two support categories, if, for example, female his peers had encouraged his leave while his wife had not. However, the strong position spouses have in this application of work-family decision shifts the support aspect into a singular, micro perspective of spouse.

More broad discussions of the support aspect with the interviewees indicate that they believe that women are still under tremendous pressure to maintain the mom, or nurturing role. This consistent pressure for women to maintain the nurturing role then relieves the pressure for men to completely re-evaluate their roles as fathers.

I think that's a lot of pressure on women to take parental leave, maternity leave, full-time and maybe even quit the job and stay at home. The other side of the coin is that the fathers should work because the women are staying at home. And yeah, this is the – like with – that's an interesting point because there's not so much – it's a little bit of pressure maybe, social pressure on men to go to work but I think the main thing is that there is a lot of pressure for women to stay at home and quit the job at least for some time, or go part time for two or three years, get a part time job but not a full time job, which is not possible for faculty members. You can't really have a part time job. You would just teach but quit research, that

would be the part time solution and that would be ridiculous. And so I think the pressure on the women is the point why not too many men are taking parental leave.

We discovered quite by accident by doing that this great social experiment. Cause every time she walked into the room everyone actually went, “What kind of an idiot doesn’t know not to bring their three month old to a conference?” Right? Like, “Holy mackerel! Take a leave lady!” You know? “Get out of here”, right? Often she felt quite hostile, and you know; “now you sit by the door cause if that baby starts crying you get out of here.” Again, it wasn’t quite that baldly stated but surely that was the message that she was getting. I walk into a room and people would say, “Oh gees, you bring your – what a great dad you are! Don’t you dare leave. We love children in this place”, and “you know, you just sit there with that baby! That’s marvellous!”

The two above quotes are examples of the pressures that some women are faced with when choosing to pursue a career as well as raising a family. The second quote demonstrates the hostility towards women who are attempting to balance the work and family lives; but at the same time, a mixed message is being given due to the encouragement that men are receiving for making a work-family balancing choice. The lack of support for hegemony implicit in this supportive attitude towards men attempting to be more involved with their family may be thus be counteracted by the reluctance their spouses may have with sharing leave time due to worries of being ostracized for being a bad mother. However, most of the interviewees indicate that their spouses positively influenced their decision to exercise their parental leave benefits.

In most cases, the interviewees suggested that they felt that their spouses had number one priority when making a decision based on family issues such as leave benefits.

Absolutely. I’d be a huge advocate for it. I push colleagues I see and say, Take it ... I think yeah, I would certainly know that taken in any other context I would – the only decision then would be if it’s one that you have to proportion with your wife how much the wife gets, and I think the wife gets first dibs. I’m enough of a traditionalist to think that that’s important. But I think the ideal is where you get

at least a period of time around the birth or where there's medical problems to be there for the family.

I think just that my wife did have the eligibility for leave herself and very much desired to take that leave was the major factor.

In both of the above quotes, the interviewees demonstrate their beliefs that their wives have the final decision regarding the extent of their parental leave benefits. The first quote shows that the interviewee desired to take leave and then negotiated how much leave time he would have but acknowledged that his wife was in the power position in the negotiations. The second interviewee accepted his wife's desire to have the leave and did not pursue the benefit. These quotes also show how the influence of supporting and not supporting the hegemony of men affects the final decision. However, some of the interviewees suggested that women are expending a lot of resources to not support the provider niche that men have established.

Many of the interviewees cite their spouse as the main reason for their decision to exercise their parental leave benefits. They also suggest that women are the main force behind the revolutionary cultural view that men should have a greater family involvement.

I guess I would look at it a bit in reverse. It maybe came from the female side of things maybe to do less of the sort or tradition, what's viewed as a traditional women's role. And maybe sort of pressure came from there to do a little bit less of that and for that to happen someone had to take up the slack and it would probably be us. So whether the women's rights movement has been powerful, particularly in the democratic countries – and rightly so.

I'm pretty good at compartmentalizing and so when I decided to do this I knew the conditions under which it had to be, and my spouse is also very good at keeping me honest about these things. You know, sometimes you feel like perhaps you should be doing something and she's very good at reminding me why I should leave it alone and let other people do it. So yeah, I mean we work pretty well together on that sort of – creating space for ourselves.

In both quotations above, the interviewees admit that there was pressure for them to take parental leave because of the influences of women. The first interviewee talks about a general pressure at a macro scale for men to take leave due to women's movements. The second quote discusses the direct request from his spouse to take leave and to reduce his work efforts while he was on leave. The constancy of the requests from his spouse is indicative of revolutionary actions. Such constant reminders that there needs to be change in the interviewee's actions are similar to the constant reminders that public protests create in order to change government policy. The protests gain the attention of the attended target long enough to generate an opportunity to state the reasons for a desired change; hopefully the target considers the arguments and makes a favourable shift in behaviour.

### ***5.7 Interrelations***

The interrelation aspect refers to how the first six aspects of the hegemony of men interrelate to form an accepted platform for men to stage a dominant position in society. Hearn (2004) states that the interrelation aspect "involves placing the biology and biological differences firmly in the cultural frame" through the different relationships that the first six aspects have with one another (p. 61). The parental leave decision is a complex decision which involves gathering information from many sources which allows for interrelations between the previous six aspects to occur. Interrelations between the six aspects are so ingrained that it is difficult to separate them out individually. For example, discussing with an interviewee the reactions other male colleagues had towards his decision automatically incorporates the practice, social process and the complicitness aspect. This is because practices refers to the messages that colleagues in influential

positions have on the decision, social process refers to any comments they have about being a man and complicitness incorporates to the process in which the interviewee struggles with giving in to hegemonic pressures. In particular, I identified three prominent interrelations that emerged from my exploration of the seven aspects with respect to the parental leave decision. The identified interrelations are provider, revolutionary and behaviour-based conflict.

### ***5.7.1 Provider***

In my study, one major interrelation in the parental leave decision involves redefining men's family role as provider. The provider interrelation is a complex interrelation between social process, distinction, complicitness, practice and support. The first part of the interrelation is the social process aspect. The social process aspect is highlighted in this interrelation through the biological identification that men do not have breasts. The lack of functioning breasts supports the idea that men are unable to be as nurturing as women with regards to child rearing. This interrelates with the distinction aspect because men then rank their female spouses' opinions higher than their own in family decision-making processes because they perceive females as having superior abilities as nurturers. However, some men try to compensate for their perceived lower distinction by elevating and expanding their provider roles into the realm of domestic labour. Complicitness and practice are also involved in the interrelation because men see that other men label family decisions and maintenance as "women's work" which is supported in the media. However, the provider interrelation highlights the complicitness aspect when interviewees take leave because of the interviewees' opinions that the acceptance of men taking parental leave is based on the frequency of previous male

colleagues exercising their right. This demonstrates complicitness being used as a measuring tool for determining what areas of social process, distinction and practices that an interviewee wants to align with their views of self. The practice of colleagues stating that it is important to pick up the slack at home by performing tasks such as housework and errands so that their spouse can maintain a high level of baby nurturing is also highlighted during the work-family decision. In this case, the unwritten practice of some men supporting the leave policy by expanding the provider role allows for a greater chance of the policy's acceptance by the rest of the university's male population. Greater acceptance rate of the policies allows the social processes of the hegemony of men to adapt to the new demands of fatherhood while still supporting hegemonic ideals. The final aspect that is involved in the provider interrelation is the support aspect.

The support aspect is highlighted through women's encouragement or contradiction of men's decisions based on their perceived social role in the family. Men's views of their social role are based on their perceived status in the family decision-making process and their perceptions of the complicitness and practices of other men. The outcome of this interrelation is the expansion of the provider role to include domestic duties involving manual labour such as washing dishes, cleaning the home, and supplying the home with necessary goods by shopping. Support is a key aspect for accepting the expanding provider role. Social process, distinction and men's practices will not be able to complete the expansion of men's role in the family because women are able to have the final decision involving family affairs due to their dominant position in domestic decision-making. Men are more likely to follow through with their desires to take leave if their spouses encourage them to do so; furthermore the interviewees stated that they

would not exercise the benefit if their wives were unwilling to share the leave. However in this case not supporting the provider role did not eliminate it. The provider role was redefined instead of men shifting to a more nurturing role within the family.

The expansion of the provider role has created an opportunity to expand the competition for distinction between men. Men who perform their expanded roles as provider while maintaining the original role of financial supporter view themselves as the ultimate father or family man. They are able to distinguish themselves over men who just maintain financial supporter status and over men who are solely in the home support function. However, accusations of cheating at the distinction game have resulted because of the availability of the new ultimate provider distinction.

I know one person in our area was using it as a sort of mini sabbatical and I think it was - And then the second kid the wife said, No you're not taking a leave because I'm the one who ends up doing all the baby work.

I do see guys around me who are – they mostly seem to be aware that it's there but whether they choose to take it – you got the few guys that take it and the rumour is that they took the time to be with their kids but they weren't. They went and did research, they went and did private consulting, they went and did some other aspect of their career and just found that it made space for them in their work time so that they could exploit something else.

This is supported by the interviewees' suggestions that their colleagues only exercise their parental leave benefits as an opportunity to take a mini sabbatical in order to gain an edge in their research. However, all interviewees suggest that they were able to maintain their status at work while performing the necessary tasks that qualified them to take parental leave and exonerated them as potential cheaters of the system.

### ***5.7.2 Revolutionary***

The revolutionary interrelation is created by women not supporting the hegemony of men with regards to the tradition that only women should take parental leave.

However, the revolutionary interrelation is more than just not supporting the traditional role of men in the family. The revolutionary takes an active role in changing the practices of organizations and government to help shift men's opinions regarding the parental leave decision. This active push to change organizational and government policy establishes a interrelationship between the support and practices aspects. Interviewees acknowledge that the catalyst for change in practices regarding parental leave was accomplished by actively not supporting traditional views at both the micro and macro level.

I guess I would look at it a bit in reverse. It maybe came from the female side of things maybe to do less of the sort or tradition, what's viewed as a traditional women's role. And maybe sort of pressure came from there to do a little bit less of that and for that to happen someone had to take up the slack and it would probably be us. So whether the women's rights movement has been powerful, particularly in the democratic countries – and rightly so.

I'm pretty good at compartmentalizing and so when I decided to do this I knew the conditions under which it had to be, and my spouse is also very good at keeping me honest about these things. You know, sometimes you feel like perhaps you should be doing something and she's very good at reminding me why I should leave it alone and let other people do it. So yeah, I mean we work pretty well together on that sort of – creating space for ourselves.

At the micro level, the second quote demonstrates how the interviewee's spouse ensured that he had more involvement in the family activities by keeping him "honest". The quote also illustrates how direct practice of not supporting the traditional male role influences the behaviour of the interviewee. The "keeping me honest" comment also helps to exonerate the interviewee from any suggestions of him cheating to gain the ultimate provider status. Women are also credited as the instigators of the revolutionary shift in expectations of greater family involvement for men. At the macro level, the first quote demonstrates how some men feel that women's movements for equality has created extra pressure for men to pick up the slack in the home as women leave to pursue a greater distinction in their careers. The acceptance of men taking leave will increase as

more men exercise their new parental leave rights created by pressures of the revolutionary movement.

The relationship between support and practices at the University of Lethbridge is then operating in a check and balance system. Written practices established by the government are adopted by the university and are disseminated into the population through the ULFA handbook as well as through university policy. At the University level, support then acts as both a watchdog and as a catalyst for change. Support functions as a watchdog by looking for imbalances in the policy based on gender and as a catalyst for change through negotiations for gender recognition or equality in the university's policies. Support at a more macro level can have a greater impact on the University of Lethbridge policies by influencing governmental labour policies. Changes in government policies provide a greater influence for initiating change because of the requirements to follow the law.

In this application of the seven aspects, practices influence support by providing an opportunity for a misinterpretation of organizational policy. For example, the University of Lethbridge's parental leave policy incorporates a 'primary caregiver' clause to deter nonparents from misusing the policy. As demonstrated in the practice section in the results, it is the 'primary caregiver' clause that creates the greatest confusion in the policy. Confusion in the interpretation of the policy influenced some women to support the hegemony of men because of the discourse of 'family'. Spouses that share an interviewee's nuclear definition of family will also make the interpretation that "primary" can only mean one parent. This interpretation combined with the desire to breastfeed

automatically forces the spouse to determine that it would be best for the child if she is the one that will assume the nurturing role and take leave.

### ***5.7.3 Behaviour-based Conflict***

Emerging behaviour-based conflict struggles for male faculty members at the University of Lethbridge was also detected in the results when exploring the seven aspects of the hegemony of men. Behaviour-based conflict is described by Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) as the conflict that a person will experience when the expected behaviour at work deviates from the expected behaviour at home. This concept is highlighted when the behaviour expectations at work and at home are in transition. The aspects that create behaviour-based conflict interrelation are social process, distinction, practice, complicitness, and support. Under the work-family umbrella, social process, distinction and complicitness are supporting the view that men are the providers for the family. This is demonstrated by the arena in which men build their distinction as men. Most men build their distinction through their careers and standing within the community. This is supported by the social processes of the hegemony of men that suggest that men should be the monetary provider for the family to help ensure the survival of their families. In this application, the interviewees use complicitness as a gauge for monitoring their surroundings to ensure that they are positioning themselves as a provider in the same manner as other men around them in order to reduce the chance of distinction loss by being ostracized by other males.

Men don't take as strong or active a role with child rearing as women do. I think you'd be hard pressed to make a case that they do. So in that sense it's similar within and without the faculty. In the university I think it's a little bit of a special case in that I think it's in large part due to this, sort of the big myth of the extreme importance of the job they're doing. It's something I see as a myth. They're doing

a job, it's not to say it isn't an important job, but garbage collecting is an important job too. It doesn't mean you can't take care of your family.

You need to be everything. You need to be a provider, you need to be your wife's best friend and you need to keep the home fires burning, you've got to be a performer at work, you know, I guess in some ways you gotta present this sort of aura of someone who works hard but plays hard and I guess has some outside interests etc. it's basically the complete package.

These two quotes demonstrate the ingrained gender roles that the social processes have on the expectations of the father in the family. Quote one demonstrates this by the matter of fact comment that men don't take an active role in the family but seek distinction through their work. The first quote also shows the comparison between his view of society's ideals and how he perceives what a father should be. In the second quote, the interviewee expands the definition of provider to include the home and spousal relations in the mix allowing him to build distinction through the home as well as work by being complicit with his updated view of provider.

The practice aspect interrelates with social process, distinction and complicitness by not supporting some of the fathers' position of just being a financial provider. The written policies of the government and of the University of Lethbridge are in conflict with the goals of the social process, distinction and complicitness aspects. These written policies were written to include men in the parental leave model in order to ensure a perception of equal treatment for employees of different sex. This means that the policy's intent is to include men in the possibility of pursuing a nurturing role in the family. However, the ambiguous 'primary caregiver' clause also allowed some interviewees to formulate opinions that the parental leave benefit is designated for women exclusively because of social process beliefs that one must breastfeed in order to be granted 'primary caregiver' status.

Support is the final piece to the behaviour-based conflict interrelation because of the power position that men believe women have in family leave decisions. The support aspect can either conflict with or support the hegemonic practices and social process aspects which provide the ground-work for behaviour-based conflict. The two above quotes demonstrate the conflict through the recognition that the social processes of the hegemony of men dictate that men should be providers but the new written practices of the university creates the feeling that “you need to be everything”. The interviewee’s suggestion that a father “needs to be everything” demonstrates increased domestic demand for fathers which increases the potential for conflict between work and family obligations.

Research suggests that most women face the behaviour-based conflict dilemma when they have to act in a masculine fashion in the workplace but still need to maintain their feminine behaviours in the family home (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985; Runté, 2005). The men in this study identified that they also face similar shifts in behaviour expectations between the workplace and the home; however they identify the workplace as influencing them to attempt a more nurturing role as a parent but feel that other conflicting messages make it difficult to know how to behave. For example, one interviewee specifically pointed out that he feels that even though there is new legislation for men to take leave, there is a lack of support by women even though there is a push for equality between sexes. Even so, most interviewees demonstrate their ingrained beliefs that men are more suited as the provider when they suggest a supporting role clause for the primary caregiver benefit.

## 6. Discussion

### *6.1 Feminist Theory and Men*

Hearn's (2004) proposed seven aspects of the hegemony of men as the building blocks for the maintenance of hegemonic activities and beliefs for society as a whole. The shift of focus from masculinity to men allows Hearn to focus on the hegemonic activities of the male gender without delving into the depths of psychoanalytical research of cross-gender masculine behaviours. It has been suggested that formulations in gender and power to locate masculine and feminine activities in order to understand the global dominance of men over women are inadequate (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). However, the results of my study demonstrate men's realignment of self with shifting behaviour expectations, or active resistance to newly prescribed expectations, in order to maintain their manliness and social dominance. Furthermore, these specific behaviour adaptations blended within the comprehensive seven aspects model may assist researchers' understanding of men's power relationships and provide support for the proposition that a hybrid hegemonic masculinity can reproduce itself through adaptation (Demetriou, 2001).

Exploring the work-family investment decision for male faculty members at the University of Lethbridge highlighted several instances of power relationships between both the interviewees and other men as well as between the interviewees and women. Most notably, the focal points of the study are the analysis of the domestic relationships with their spouses and their working relationship with their peers within the university and abroad. Using a key work-family investment decision in a man's life allowed me to explore in detail Hearn's proposed seven aspects of the hegemony of men because of the

complexity of the decision and its possible impacts on the hegemonic representation of fatherhood.

The traditional image of fatherhood set out by the interviewees was that of a strong leader of the family that provided the foundation for the mother to create a nurturing environment through monetary provisions. This is demonstrated by the interviewees comparing their roles as dads with their fathers' role from when the interviewees were growing up. The comparison between themselves and their fathers allowed the interviewees to demonstrate the expansion of the father role for men as women's liberations led women away from the home. Most interviewees believe that the act of exercising the parental leave benefit and helping at the home demonstrates that men are moving into a more nurturing role. However, some of the interviewees shifted their positions once they explained their responsibility in the family home because they felt that their inability to breastfeed excluded them from the nurturing role. Many interviewees established an expanded provider model to counter their inability to function fully in their criteria of the nurturing position. The reconstruction of the presentation of men's newly expanded provider roles in order to realign men's ideas of masculinity within a female dominated domestic setting is supported by research of men combating distinction challenges when their jobs are in a female dominated sector such as nursing (Lupton, 2000). The expanded provider role includes holding and playing with the child in order to give the mother time to care for herself as well as an increased support role in domestic labour such as cooking, cleaning and other household chores.

The expanded provider role offers an opportunity for men to compete for the ultimate provider distinction. The opportunity to establish themselves as being able to

maintain a distinctive career while taking time off from work to support the family establishes a high level of excellence in the requirements of fatherhood and manhood. The maintenance of distinction and power within the university community while attempting to fulfill family needs is similar to Connell's discussion of the reaffirmation of male dominance within local orthodoxies and hierarchies (Connell, 1998). Men's complicit behaviour allows for the acceptance of a new requirement for manhood because of pressures to conform to emerging opinions about parental leave. Nevertheless, the interviewees had the opportunity to conform to either of two opposing philosophies regarding men and parental leave because it has been recognised that attitudes towards the policy are still in flux. Fluctuating role requirements for men can and have created an opportunity for a backlash against the change by influential male-dominated subcultures within the university. One form of backlash revealed by the interviewees is the allegations of abuse of the parental leave benefit in order to gain research advantage. Hollenshead et al. (2005) discusses the potential negative impacts that informal, or non-written policies can have on the perceived behaviour expectations for men in the distinction building process in which they discuss the effect that a small elite subculture can have on the behaviour expectations of an entire organization. Most interviewees agree that backlash attempts, such as accusation of cheating the system, come from small subcultures within the university. However, some interviewees believe that the source of conflicting non-written behaviour expectations can come from more than faculty groups who are senior to the university (Hollenshead et al., 2005). Some interviewees were able to create an alternative to dealing with complicitness and distinction pressures through distinction sharing. Distinction sharing is illustrated by some interviewees when they

establish that they were able to exercise their parental leave benefit because their wives' highly distinctive careers needed more consideration than their own. In fact, most interviewees recognized that they would be much more willing to take parental leave to support their spouse's career if that career was equally or more distinctive than their own.

In general, interviewees stated that their spouses were in the position of power during the parental leave negotiations. They acknowledge women as the catalyst for change in the views on parental leave because of their fight for equality in the workplace. Women's efforts in changing the parental leave legislation are recognized as benefitting men because they are now able to negotiate in a power position for parental leave with their employer. However, biology does not grant fathers full power in parental leave negotiations. Interviewees believe that breastfeeding is the most important action in ensuring a healthy future for their child and refer to scientific research in medicine to support their beliefs. It is this biological argument that contributes to tremendous pressure for women to stay home and care for the child because of worries of being ostracized as a bad mother. This position is further supported by Brandth and Kvande's (2001) research that states that, "the mother has the first choice" because of established social norms that "good mothers take leave" (p. 261). The tremendous pressures on women combined with legal obligations of the employer gives men the opportunity to manoeuvre a decision towards what suits their needs while still acknowledging the needs of others. The opportunity to use a counter-hegemonic objective as a hegemonic tool is supported by some conclusions that hegemonic blocks change in a very "deceptive and unrecognizable way... through negotiation, appropriation, and translation, through the transformation of what appears counter-hegemonic and progressive into an instrument of backwardness and

patriarchal reproduction” (Demetriou, 2001, p. 355). However, I would like to point out that most interviewees seemed to have a genuine interest in building a better relationship with their kids even though an opportunity to gain a hegemonic advantage for exploitation is revealed.

#### ***6.4 Practical Implications***

The faculty members’ interviews reveal that the social process aspect of the hegemony of men does not consider the national culture of the individual. Cultural differences between the interviewees are highlighted in the parental leave decision-making process when they discuss their views on what it means to be a family and a provider. The discourse of family can shift from a nuclear to an extended definition depending on the cultural background of the individual. This means that the first aspect of social process needs to include a cultural element in order for it to reflect societal differences in application.

A practical implication for the inclusion of culture in the social process aspect is in the development of organizational policies. For example, the University of Lethbridge’s parental leave policy caused confusion among its members as to how to interpret the primary caregiver clause because of the differing opinion as to what the definition of family should be. Defining the primary caregiver clause in the context of a specific family definition may reduce the confusion as to the intent of the clause. Also, predefining terms such as ‘family’ and ‘primary caregiver’ will help establish ground rules if a policy is to be negotiated between two groups such as a management team and a union representative. The development of ground rules in negotiations is not a new

concept. In 1991, William Ury published a book, “Getting Past No” which discusses the concept of setting ground rules in the negotiation process (Ury, 1991).

## 7. Conclusions

### *7.1 Theoretical Contribution*

Applying the seven aspects of the hegemony of men by exploring these concepts in the parental leave decision has the potential to promote greater understanding into how hegemonic influences are factored into work-family decision-making in general. In particular, analysing such a major work-family investment decision provides the groundwork for applying each proposed aspect, but also allows for the potential of refining Hearn's seven aspects proposal. My analysis of the work-family investment decision-making process made productive use of the seven aspects of the hegemony of men influence on a work family decision. However, the application of the seven aspects to the work-family decision also demonstrates the shifting roles the seven aspects may play in a micro application.

The first contribution that my study has is that six of the seven proposed aspects have varying levels of influence in the work-family decision. In this particular work-family investment decision, the complicitness aspect function of identifying "the most widespread, repeated forms of men's practices" (Hearn, 2004, p. 61) is used as a measuring tool to compare social processes with organizational practices in order to determine an appropriate course of action. This comparison demonstrates the interrelation between the social process aspect and the practices aspect; however complicitness was not itself a prominent aspect in this instance. However, complicitness may be a more distinct aspect in other hegemonic applications.

The second contribution is the addition of the intra-relations within each aspect that surfaced from analysing a micro decision-making process within the context of

macro defined aspects. The relationship between subdivisions of one aspect are highlighted in the study due to the broad macro definitions of each individual aspect which can be broken down during a micro, or specific event of an individual, such as the parental leave decision. For example, my study demonstrates the breakdown of the broad definition of practices when the interviewees expressed their concerns over trying to determine whether to make the parental leave decision based on the written policy or on the unwritten traditions of the faculty community. Other aspects such as social processes also have internal relationships within the aspect because of the interaction of different cultural views.

The study also found that any application of the macro definition of social process should consider cultural differences between employees and their colleges and employers. For example, the importance of identifying culture within the social process aspect was identified through the intra-relation between university policies built with a North American discourse of family interacting with employees who have differing family definitions. The inclusion of culture within the definition of social process will give future studies a framework for analysis when determining the effect social process has on the hegemonic process of men.

Finally, the application of the seven aspects of the hegemony of men highlights that the contradiction between men's actions and the ideal form of men's behaviours in the parental leave decision is based on conflicting discourses between differing definitions of family and the definition of father. Some interviewees demonstrated that contradictions between their behaviour and their view of the ideal man's behaviour stemmed from being unable to perform their desired roles as father because their nuclear

definition of family prevented them from identifying themselves as a primary caregiver. Most interviewees believe that they behave within their definitions of how an ideal man should behave unless an outside source, such as an employer's policy, prevents them from doing so.

## ***7.2 Practical Contributions***

The primary caregiver clause in the parental leave policy created the greatest confusion for the interviewees when they were trying to determine their eligibility to exercise the benefit. The confusion stemmed from the discourse of 'primary caregiver' and its association with the nurturer role. Most men interviewed associated the primary caregiver term with the ability to breastfeed because feeding is considered the most important, and therefore primary, part of caring for a newborn child. This is most apparent when the interviewee has a nuclear definition of family because the interviewee creates an 'either-or' decision model for deciding who cares for the child in the primary role. In addition, the desire to function within the family in order to qualify as a primary caregiver is in direct conflict with the desire to maintain their predetermined social role as a provider. This conflict creates high levels of stress, anger and anxiety for fathers trying to qualify for the benefit while ensuring that their child still has the benefits of being breastfed. This is demonstrated through the suggestions that the policy should be written to include a supporting role function in order to allow and encourage fathers to take leave to help the mother with maintaining the home as well as caring for the child. The suggestion would help realign their beliefs about a father's role in the family with their desire to take parental leave to be closer to their family. The suggestion also shows that most interviewees are only willing to expand their roles as providers even though they

have expressed a desire to have a more nurturing role in the family. However, not all interviewees interpreted the term “primary” in the same way.

Cultural influences on the interpretation of the primary caregiver clause demonstrate how men attempt to achieve provider expectations that are demanded by the social processes aspect. For example, interviewees who have an extended definition of family naturally separate mother and father as primary because other family members such as aunts and grandparents are considered as secondary caregivers. Interviewees with a nuclear definition of family are forced into an either/or decision as to which parent gets granted primary status because of the extended family are not considered as caregivers. The ability for some interviewees to include the father as a primary caregiver allows them to exercise the parental leave benefit without feeling they have cheated organizational benefit systems. The ability for some interviewees to consider themselves as primary caregivers does not translate into having to behave as a nurturer because established social processes still dictate provider expectations. Interviewees with a nuclear definition of family are unable to comprehend how to claim primary caregiver status without establishing themselves as the nurturer or co-nurturer in their family. Most interviewees that define themselves to be more nurturing still believe they are functioning in a supporting role within the family. Interviewees’ explanation of the supporting role as being there to pick up any slack in the domestic chores, assisting their spouse with diaper duty and other activities involving their baby were very similar regardless of their interpretation of ‘family’. However, a difference in interpretation of the primary caregiver clause creates an organizational culture of mistrust. Most notably,

interviewees' consistently accusing others of cheating the parental leave system by alerting me of the possibility that the parental leave could be used as a "mini-sabbatical".

The interviewees identify that men are expanding the provider role into the home in the form of domestic labourer such as cooking, cleaning and shopping in order to maintain their masculine image. The identification of an expanding provider role does not match the parental leave policies within the University of Lethbridge because of the policy's 'primary caregiver' clause. Most interviewees expressed that the discourse of primary caregiver gave them the sense that the father had to fill the primary nurturer role in order to qualify for the leave benefit. However, the interviewees also expressed that the nurturer role is automatically granted to the mother because of her ability to breastfeed. This demonstrates that parental leave policies within an organization must consider the biological differences between parents in order to reduce implied meanings or misinterpretations. An initial formulation of men's work-family investment decision-making process allows organizations to build policies and strategies that can build a less stressful work-family relationship for both men and women by recognising potential differences in policy interpretation between the sexes.

One other practical implication of this study is to help build awareness of potential negative impacts that organizational policies can create when they are built on preconceived cultural norms. Multiple interpretations of a single policy can create confusion for all potential users, especially in an organization that has an international employee base. In the University of Lethbridge's case, suspicions of cheating the parental leave benefit to gain a higher distinction as a researcher are based on differing interpretations of what it means to be a primary caregiver. Clearly defining what it means

to be a primary caregiver may reduce any potential misinterpretations of the intent of the policy and will help set ground rules for negotiations involving the parental leave benefit.

### ***7.3 Limitations***

The results of this study are limited to the opinions expressed by the University of Lethbridge's faculty and staff that were interviewed. This means that other faculty members not interviewed may have experienced different circumstances in their decision-making process that were not expressed in this study. However, further studies into hegemonic pressures may use my results as framework for debate because I was able to establish the saturation of data.

Also, economic factors were limited in this study to focus on the analysis of the effect that hegemonic pressures have on the decision-making process. I acknowledge that many work-family decisions are based on potential economic consequences and that hegemonic pressures may be overshadowed by the monetary requirements for raising a family.

### ***7.4 Future Research***

Behaviour-based conflict is highlighted as a major concern for men faced with a work-family investment decision. There are two opposing behaviour expectations that are in conflict when the interviewees are deciding whether or not to exercise their parental leave benefit. The two opposing expectations consist of either functioning in their family as a nurturer or functioning as a provider. Runté (2005) states that the nurturing role is categorized as a feminine behaviour along with other traits such as passiveness, dependence, and emotional expressiveness; alternatively the provider role is perceived as

a more masculine behaviour along with self-reliance, physical toughness and aggressiveness. The behaviour-based conflict in the parental leave decision is derived from the opposing behaviour expectations of the workplace and the home. However, the interviewees indicate that the behaviour expectation of the workplace and home are opposite to what women face when experiencing behaviour-based conflict.

The conflicting signals within Hearn's practices aspect regarding the expected behaviour of a father produce confusion in behaviour expectations between work and family. In the parental leave case, the father expects to be able to act in an expanded provider role to support his family because he believes that being unable to breastfeed excludes him from a true nurturing role. The interviewees' belief that breastfeeding determines who is in the nurturing role is supported by their spouses during their negotiations for sharing the parental leave benefit. However, the University of Lethbridge's policy is open to both men and women but suggests that the parent exercising the benefit should act as the nurturer in order to qualify for the leave.

The ingrained provider role also generates anxiety for the fathers interviewed because feelings of "cheating the system" arise when they periodically check in at work. The desire to work while on leave to ensure minimal task build up on their return date while attempting to minimize suspicions of cheating from their coworkers compounds behaviour-based conflict for the interviewees who have a nuclear definition of family. The perceived suspicious atmosphere also creates a conflict in behaviour expectations within the practices of the university. For example, the university's policy promotes the parent taking leave to engage with their family in a more feminine role; however verbal and other cues from other faculty members imply that fathers are unable to do so and

should be back at work. For example, one interviewee stated that “society thinks something is wrong” when a father stays at home because society views men as the provider within the family unit. The mixed messages between the two forms of organizational practices inflate feelings of uncertainty as to the role the father should be playing within their family.

The primary caregiver clause was not considered a barrier for some of the interviewees involved in the study. The reason for this seems to stem from cultural differences in the interpretation of primary caregiver. Faculty who have a cultural background that promotes an extended family model which includes grandparents, aunts, etcetera as responsible for the support care of a child interpret the term primary to include both parents. The interviewees with an extended family definition were able to apply for the parental leave benefits without the guilt or concern for being able to qualify because their definition of primary caregiver allowed them to align their role as a father with benefit requirements without considering themselves in a nurturing role. The behaviour-based conflict is reduced by shifting the discourse of primary caregiver without having to adjust the predetermined role of a father established through social processes.

The result of the organization being the catalyst for suggesting men shift their behaviour to a more nurturing role in the family and creating a source of behaviour-based conflict is counter-intuitive to what I expected. My intuition gave me reason to believe that the workplace was the dominant source for supporting masculine behaviour because behaviour expectations of management and higher level positions are usually thought to be aggressive in nature. However, the interviewees demonstrated in the above discussion that some of the university’s unwritten practices still promote masculine behaviours of its

employees. Further study of work-family conflict for men created by conflict within an organization's practices and differing cultural interpretations of those practices would create an excellent opportunity to expand the behaviour-based conflict literature.

The investigation of the effects of the seven aspects of the hegemony of men on a work-family investment decision allows for a future analysis of the process behind the decision of whether to exercise the parental leave benefit at the University of Lethbridge. I have identified a basic process that most of my interviewees went through during their decision parental leave decisions.

The first step, interpretation of parameters, involves identifying what decision has to be made and confirming their eligibility for the benefit. The first stage, identifying the decision to be made is influenced through cultural norms and social processes identified by Hearn's seven aspects of the hegemony of men. For example, it may be decided that there are no viable alternatives other than acting as a monetary provider if the father classifies himself in a culture that believes that men do not belong in the home as a nurturer. In this case, the decision process is stopped and an immediate decision to not exercise the benefit is made. This is supported through the actions of one interviewee that stated, "Yeah, mainly men don't take care of families in my society" and did not discuss any alternatives with the university or with his family when deciding not to take leave. In most cases, the interviewee identified what decision needed to be made by investigating what options were available to them through the university benefits plan. Identifying options was done through discussions with colleagues, referring to the faculty handbook, contacting the university's human resource department and through

discussions with their spouse. In addition, the interviewees established what role they wanted to play in their family.

Interviewees determined that there were several influences in deciding what role they wanted to play in their families. These included their cultural background, their spouse's cultural background and their friends and colleagues' influences. These three influences are supported in the investigation of the social process, complicitness and support aspects. Social process does not incorporate culture of the individual; however the influence of an individual's culture was highlighted during this investigation. As stated in the previous paragraph, individuals will determine their family involvement based on a cultural norm. The cultural norm is determined by observing the behaviours of others in their family circle and through friends which is highlighted as a feature of the complicitness aspect. Men identifying specific gender practices within the dominant culture they live in for the purpose of building their identities as fathers are similar to the identity building that has been identified within male dominated occupations (Ashcroft, 2005). Complicitness can also influence a change in the individual's perception of established social processes. An example of this is when an interviewee makes a point of stating that they have inherited some North American beliefs about family due to their extended residence in the area. Research supports the idea that an individual will gauge their tolerance level for a potential backlash from their cultures of origin as well as any backlash effects from the university community before making any decision that has the potential of damaging their masculine image (McDonald et al., 2005). The support aspect demonstrates that spouses have a substantial impact on the interviewee's perspective on

his role in the family. The cultural background of the interviewee also influences the determination of eligibility

The second stage to interpreting the parameters of the decision is determining if a decision has to be made based on eligibility. Cultural influences have a tremendous impact in the interpretation of the primary caregiver clause. A shift in the interpretation of the primary caregiver clause is based on the interpretation of the discourse of family. For example, an interviewee with a nuclear definition of family treats the term primary as an either-or decision because there are only two people involved in the child rearing option. However, someone with an extended family model is able to group larger sections of the family into the primary and secondary categories which allows both mother and father to be considered primary and the extended family to be categorised as secondary. Having a nuclear definition of family influenced interviewees to be creative in determining their parental leave eligibility. Individuals researched possible “loopholes” in the parental leave benefit and reviewed how others exercised the benefit in order to determine their options. However, the fear that over usage of available loopholes will create suspicion from the organization caused the interviewees to review options that had the least chance of having them being labelled as a cheater of the system.

The second step to the decision-making process involves the interviewee probing the workplace and social network to judge the level of social acceptance. Interviewees that were considering leave identified that their spouse was the first person that they asked for an opinion on the possibility of taking leave. As stated in the results section, the spouse is usually considered to have first priority with parental leave benefits. There is a good chance of a quick decision at this step in the decision-making process because of

the spouse's dominant position in work-family decisions. For example, some interviewees stated that their spouses claimed full year of leave at the probing stage which made the decision to not exercise the benefit automatic. The support aspect has been identified by the interviewees as the deciding factor in their parental leave decision. The support aspect is rooted in the reaction of the interviewee's spouse to the question of whether he should exercise the parental leave benefit. Interviewees continued their probing process if their spouse showed support for sharing the parental leave benefit. Most of the interviewees felt their spouses had top priority in any family-based decisions which included the sharing of parental leave benefits. In general, this means that the interviewee would choose not to exercise their parental leave benefits if the interviewee's spouse supports the traditional views of men supporting their families through work or supports that the woman's family role is in the home. Furthermore, the choice to take parental leave benefits was only made with the full support of their spouse.

The second stage of the probing process involves the analysis of the reactions other colleagues received when exercising the leave benefit. The analysis involved asking the colleagues what the process was like and to ask if they would do it again. Most interviewees also stated that there was some form of feeling out possible reactions to a leave announcement by discussing the possibility with the chair of their department. The step of probing for acceptance is closely related to the acceptance interrelation discussed in the results section. Interviewees believe probing to be a lot more difficult if their department is not accustomed to male faculty members exercising the parental leave benefit because there is a lack of available information on how to prepare for leave negotiations.

The third step in the decision-making process is implementing a cost-benefit analysis. The interviewee reviews the costs and benefits their decision will have on their spousal relations, work relations, career and distinction. The cost-benefit analysis on their spousal relation revolves around the speculation on the potential negative impact that sharing leave will have on their spouse. For example, one interviewee stated in the support section that women experience a greater sense of guilt from leaving the home due to high levels of pressure to be a 'good mom'. The interviewee determines if the negative pressures on their spouse will be greater or less than the benefits of being in a more supportive role as a father. Analysing spousal impacts is a key because of the perceived dominance that the spouse has in the work-family investment decision.

Work relations and career are analysed by assessing the potential negative effects taking leave has on the relationship between the interviewee and the interviewee's colleagues, superiors and funding organizations. Work relations are the working relationships that have been developed at the university. The interviewee weigh the risk of colleagues and superiors labelling them as a cheater of the system to the potential reward of increasing their distinction at work by being able to carry out the more demanding extended provider role without damaging their career. The cost-benefit analysis regarding career revolves around the ability to maintain or increase research funding in order to produce publications in their field of study. Potential reductions in publications due to taking a leave is factored into the parental leave decision because of the risk of funding institutions reducing grant sizes in response to a lowered research output. Human capital theory supports the concept that a person is less likely to risk damaging their career if there is a greater expenditure of human capital (Becker, 2007).

Interviewees demonstrate human capital theory by weighing the risks to their funding and publication output before making a final leave decision. However, some interviewees discussed the potential impacts to their spouses' careers as part of their cost-benefit analysis. Distinction sharing with the spouse becomes an option when the interviewee perceives that any losses to their own distinction will be outweighed by the potential of their spouse being able to maintain or gain distinction if they stay at home. Most interviewees acknowledged that they are more willing to take leave if their spouse has an equal or higher position than themselves.

The negotiation step involves determining how much leave will be shared with the spouse if they decide to exercise the parental leave benefit. Negotiations for leave time take place between both the university and their spouse with priority given to the spouse. Interviewees suggest that negotiations with the university revolve around teaching assignments. One interviewee pointed out that leave times are sectioned on a per semester basis with more pressure to work being placed on the fall and winter semesters. This means that leave benefits should have a greater chance of being exercised over the summer; however this isn't the case. A couple of interviewees indicated that the spring/summer semester is the slow period for teaching obligations at the university and therefore made it easier to fulfill work obligations and family obligations simultaneously. This means that it is believed that the benefit is more likely to be exercised during the fall and winter semesters because of increased teaching workloads.

Most interviewees suggest that spousal negotiations take place with the understanding that their spouse is in a dominant negotiation position. This is demonstrated by one interviewee stating that he fully supports men taking parental leave

but acknowledging his wife had “first dibs”. The final decision on whether to exercise the benefit or not is based on the success of their negotiations with their spouse.

However, the above process is limited to one decision in one institution. Further research into work-family decision-making processes at other institutions around the world may help provide a clearer understanding of men’s expected behaviour at a macro level.

## References

- Alberta Government (2001). *Employment standards code sections 46(1) and 50*. Edmonton, AB: Queen's Printer. Retrieved March 12, 2007, from <http://www.qp.gov.ab.ca/documents/acts/E09.cfm>
- Ashcroft K. L. (2005). Resistance through consent? Occupational identity, organizational form, and the maintenance of masculinity among commercial airline pilots [Electronic version]. *Management Communications Quarterly*, 19(1), 67-89.
- Becker G. S. (2007). Human capital. *The Concise Encyclopaedia of Economics: The Library of Economics and Liberty*. Retrieved March 26, 2007 from [www.econlib.org/library/enc/humancapital.html](http://www.econlib.org/library/enc/humancapital.html)
- Brandth B., & Kvande E. (2001). Flexible work and flexible fathers [Electronic version]. *Work, Employment & Society*, 15(2), 251-267.
- Burrell G., & Morgan G. (1979). *Social paradigms and organizational analysis: elements of the sociology of corporate life*. London: Heinemann Educational Books.
- Connell, R.W. (1998). Masculinities and globalization [Electronic version]. *Men and Masculinities*, 1, 3-23.
- Connell, R.W., & Messerschmidt, J.W. (2005). Hegemonic masculinity rethinking the concept [Electronic version]. *Gender & Society*, 19(6), 829-859.
- Demetriou, D.Z. (2001). Connell's concept of hegemonic masculinity: A critique. *Theory and Society*, 30(3), 337-361.
- Denzin, N.K., & Lincoln Y.S. (2000). *Handbook of qualitative research* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage
- Fournier, V., & Smith, W. (2006). Scripting masculinity [Electronic version]. *Ephemera Articles: Theory & Politics in Organization*, 6(2), 141-162.
- Goldscheider, F.K., & Waite, L.J. (1991). *New families, no families: The transformation of the American home*, Berkley, C.A.: University of California Press.
- Greenhaus, J. H., & Beutell, N. J. (1985). Sources of conflict between work and family roles. *The Academy of Management Review*, 10(1), 76-89.
- Hearn, J. (1998). Theorizing men and men's theorizing: Varieties of discursive practices in men's theorizing of men [Electronic version]. *Theory and Society*, 27, 781-816.

- Hearn, J. (2004). From hegemonic masculinity to the hegemony of men [Electronic version]. *Feminist Theory*, 5(1), 49-72.
- Hollenshead, C.S., Sullivan, B., Smith, G.C., August, L., & Hamilton, S. (2005). Work/family policies in higher education: Survey data and case studies of policy implementation. *New Directions for Higher Education*, 130, 41-65.
- Lobel, S. (1991). Allocation of investment in work and family roles: Alternative theories and implications for research [Electronic version]. *Academy of Management Review*, 16(3), 507-521.
- Lupton, B. (2000). Maintaining masculinity: Men who do 'women's work' [Electronic version]. *British Journal of Management*, 11, S33-S48.
- Lupton, B. (2006). Explaining men's entry into female-concentrated occupations: Issues of masculinity and social class. *Gender, Work and Organization*, 13(2), 103-128.
- Marshall, K. (2003). Parental leave: More time off for the baby. *Canadian Social Trends*, 71, 13-18.
- McCracken G. (1988). *The long interview*. Sage University Paper Series on Qualitative Research Methods. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- McDonald, P., Brown, K., & Bradley, L. (2005). Explanations for the provision-utilization gap in work-life policy. *Women in Management Review*, 20(1/2), 37-55.
- Runté, M. (2005). *The text: The HRM contributions to work-family research*. Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, Sobey School of Business at Saint Mary's University, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada.
- Runté, M., & Mills A. J. (2004). Paying the toll: A feminist post-cultural critique of the discourse bridging work and family. *Culture and Organization*, 10(3), 137-149.
- Seidler V. (1994). *Unreasonable men: Masculinity and social theory*. London: Routledge.
- Thompson, C.A., Beauvais, L.L., & Lyness, K.S. (1999). When work-family benefits are not enough: The influence of work-family culture on benefit utilization, organizational attachment, and work-family conflict [Electronic version]. *Journal of Vocational Behaviour*, 54(3), 392-415.
- Thompson, E.H., Pleck, J.H., & Ferrera, D.L. (1992). Men and masculinities: Scales for masculinity ideology and masculinity-related constructs. *Sex Roles*, 27, 573-607.

University of Lethbridge Faculty Association (2001). *Faculty handbook*. University of Lethbridge. Lethbridge, AB. Retrieved March 26, 2007 from <http://www.uleth.ca/ulfa/handbook.html>

Waters, M. A., & Bardoel, A. E. (2006). Work-family policies in the context of higher education: Useful or symbolic? [Electronic version]. *Asia Pacific Journal of Human Resources*, 44(1), 67-81.

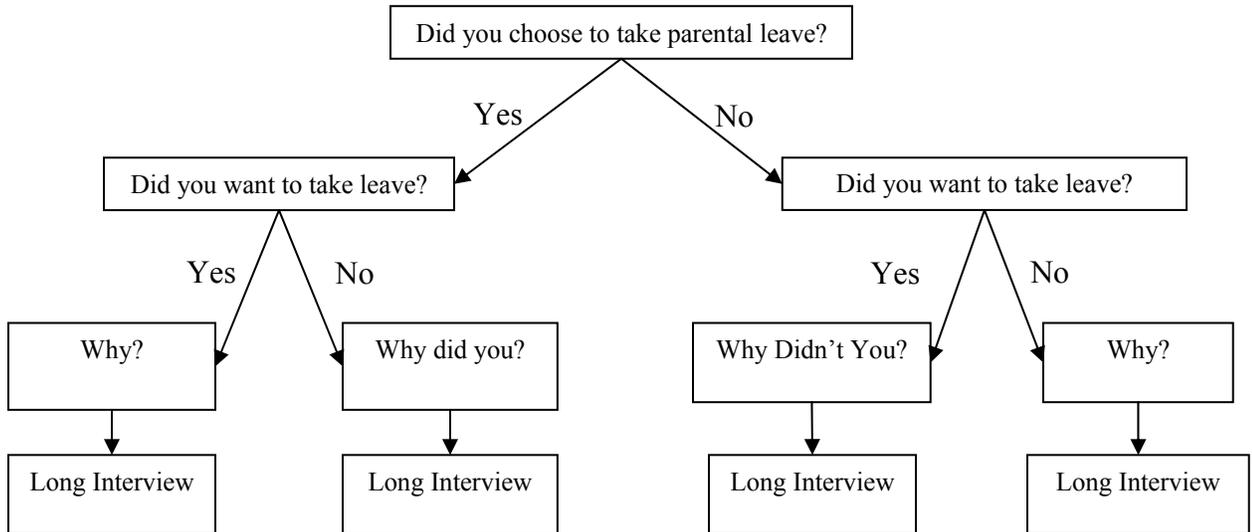
Wharton A.S., & Blair-Loy M. (2002). The “overtime culture” in a global corporation: A cross-national study of finance professionals’ interest in working part-time [Electronic version]. *Work and Occupations*, 29(1), 32-63.

## Appendixes

### Appendix 1: Preliminary Demographic Questions

1. I am confirming that your name is \_\_\_\_\_?
2. Your position at the University of Lethbridge is \_\_\_\_\_?
3. What year was your last child born?
4. Did you qualify for the university's parental leave benefits?
5. Did you have tenure when you made your parental leave decision?

### Appendix 2: Ethnographic Decision Model



### Appendix 3: Interview Guide

Research Question	Aspect Questions	Probes
How do the 7 aspect of the hegemony of men effect decisions?	<u>Social Process</u> How does your decision fit into your idea of the role of men?	1. What do you believe is the role of men in the family group?  2. Is this your cultural norm?
	<u>Distinction</u> Was your decision a natural choice or did you have to adjust your perspective to fit different opinions?	1. Would you have made a different decision if you had a higher level position at the university?  2. Same question, but lower position?
	<u>Practices</u> Did you know that parental leave benefits were available to you?	1. How were you informed of the parental benefits?  2. Was the parental benefit plans difficult or easy to find?
	<u>Complicitness</u> Do you think your decision about parental leave is out of the ordinary?	1. What decision do you think other professional men would make about parental leave? Why?  2. How many other faculty members do you know that took parental leave? Is that a lot?
	<u>Contradiction</u> Describe what you think society's idea of ideal man is?	1. Could you fit your ideal to one word?  E.g. Hero, Loyal, etc.  2. Explain why that word is appropriate.
	<u>Support</u> How did the women in your faculty react to your decision? Supportive or indifferent or not supportive?	1. How did women demonstrate their opinions? Verbally or other actions?  2. What was your spouse's input to your decision?
	<u>Interrelations</u> Did you feel that you couldn't make everyone happy with your decision? Including you.	1. Where was the biggest conflict?