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'I guess it's a dad and daughter thing... you don't talk about that...' A Discourse Analysis Exploring Daughters' Perceptions of Fatherhood and Romantic Relationships

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ABSTRACT

The proposed research aims to investigate the discourses constructed by daughters when discussing relationships with their father during adolescence and their own personal views on romantic relationships. Adolescence is the critical period in which the individual begins to break away from the family circle and develop their own personality. A time when often the attention shifts from family and is replaced by time spent with close peer groups as a source of intimacy and support. As a result of this, the father can often become an emotionally absent figure to their developing teenage daughter. The study will involve six interviews exploring daughter's perceptions of fatherhood and romantic relationships. All semi-structured interviews will be transcribed followed by thematic and discourse analysis allowing a greater depth of understanding.

KEY WORDS:	DISCOURSE ANALYSIS	SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIONISM	RELATIONSHIPS	CONFLICTING IDEOLOGIES	GENDER DOMINANCE

Introduction

'Some girls have daddies. Not just fathers, but real daddies. A girl with a daddy knows there is such a thing as a good man . She knows what a good man is, what one looks like, acts like. The rest of us are left to stumble around and learn by trial and error'. (Hutchinson and Cederbaum, 2010:561)

The above extract presents a positive image of a male figure that is more than just a father – a hero, a role model and a 'daddy'. Being privileged with this man is suggested to provide faith in the goodness of men whilst creating 'shortcuts' in the search for future spouses. The current research will explore this notion by examining daughter's constructions of fatherhood. Fathering in public discourse and popular literature has vastly increased in Western Europe in recent years (Gregory and Milner 2011). Representations of fathers in popular media convey a set of meanings that contribute toward the social construction of fatherhood in a given sociocultural setting (White, 1994). Gregory and Milners' overview found that depictions of traditional gender roles persisted alongside a newer and rather hesitant portrayal of 'new fatherhood' drawing on the affective and caring dimensions of fathering. As research in this field shows, there are certainly a good number of fathering 'ideal types', from the traditional 'breadwinner' to the much celebrated father as a 'new man' (Williams, 2008). Over the past two decades and particularly in recent years, both gender and family research has seen a considerable growth in studies integrating the current changes in this idea of fatherhood with social constructions of masculinity (Miller, 2011). While research shows that fathers often retain an attachment to the breadwinner ideal type (O'Brien and Shemilt, 2003) emphasis is now suggested to centre on a more involved role for fathers.

The New Man

A central aspect of the cultural model of father involvement is the specification of ideal roles (Denny et al, 2012). Although mothers are widely acknowledged as the primary in-home sexual educators of children, fathers also play an important role in sexual socialisation (Hutchinson et al, 2010). Bowling and Werner-Wilson (2000) found that responsible sexual behaviour among adolescent females was associated with positive father–daughter communication regarding men, dating, sex, and marriage. This positive communication might be limited, however by the level of openness between fathers and daughters. In Hutchinson and Cederbaums' (2010) study, fathers were identified as being uniquely qualified to 'give', 'bestow' or 'provide' daughters with the male perspective or act as a male role model. By being 'open', and by 'sharing his own experiences,' fathers were seen as being able to assist daughters with developing insights about men, comfort in interacting with men, and ultimately, skill in managing men and their relationships with men. This assertion is further supported by Scharf and Mayseless (2008), showing a better quality of relationship with the father to be associated with better quality of romantic relationships once formed longitudinally.

The Breadwinner

Despite research embracing models of the 'new man', Warin et al (1999) argue that cultural stereotypes such as the breadwinning role continue to hold men back from playing more active roles, notably in what are regarded as traditional 'mothering'

activities. In Western societies, fathers are commonly viewed negatively regarding nurturing and social support due to this role being historically delegated to mothers (Roberts et al, 2014). Mothering and fathering are supremely gendered contingent practices in which parents can 'struggle against their own patriarchal habits' (Ruddick, 1997: 213).By that logic, providing care traditionally associated with women is perceived by men as decreasing masculinity and increasing femininity (Magaraggia, 2012). The breadwinner role responsibility remains central to many men's family role and identities (Riley, 2003). In addition to the social prestige attached to this image, Xu and Jean Yeung (2013) concluded in their study that many fathers see financial provisioning as their main duty to their daughters. Often, the environment that the father grows up in motivates them to prioritise this role, providing the same if not better conditions for their daughters.

It could be argued that fathers are torn between the 'new man' models on the one hand, and, on the other, the traditional cultural models of fathering. This embodies the desire for a more involved role in comparison to the father who simply 'provides for' his family. The salience of a nurturant father, or one directly engaged with children, versus a breadwinner has been a main subject of research (Denny et al, 2012). Daughters have been found to view their mothers as providing a supportive mutual relationship and to perceive their fathers as authority figures with whom they spend little time (Holmbeck et al., 1995). In dual income households in particular however, there is growing evidence to show that men are taking increased responsibility for childcare (Williams, 2008). In Williams' study, fathers were perceived to distance themselves from the outdated breadwinning role in addition to the role of the emotionally distant father. Contemporary Western representations of involved fatherhood emphasise greater emotional closeness in men's 'relationships with their children and men's sharing of 'the joys and work of caregiving with mothers' (Wall and Arnold, 2007: 509).

Absent Fathers
The absent and non-providing 'bad father' is also a recognisable figure within UK policy and wider public discourse (Miller, 2011). Societal visions and cultural representations of traditional fatherhood are produced and reinforced through discourses that construct what good fathering should be (Gillies, 2009). When studying disrupted relationships, Jackson et al (2007) examined the perceptions and experiences of a group of adult daughters focusing on their relationships with their absent fathers from the time of separation in childhood and adolescence to the present time. Participants expressed that a sense of closeness and paternal care appeared to be lacking from relationships. In addition to this, constant reference to their father's presence being felt but a lack of spending quality time together was also made evident. This is echoed by conclusions from Guttman and Rosenberg (2003) who identified that children of divorced families felt distant from their fathers; distance widening with increasing age. Despite these difficulties, however, daughters continued to seek the father-daughter relationships they desired. This yearning for an idealised relationship is also exemplified by Nielson (2007). Reviewing father daughter relationships, reports showed nearly 80% of women wanted more open, honest communication with their father and desired to know him better.

Adolescent closeness to fathers is considered an important factor in understanding youth development within the context of resident and non-resident fathers (Booth et

al, 2010). In a study by East et al (2006), adult women were asked to discuss their adolescent relationships with non- resident fathers. Conclusions revealed descriptions of hurt, resentment and anger, all reinforced by irregular contact. This resulted in perceived disinterest from fathers. Furthermore, the women believed that these painful relationships with their fathers had contributed to their current relationship problems, particularly in issues surrounding trust.

Influences on Romantic Relationships
Further research provides support that quality of fathering influences the romantic lives of young heterosexual women. In this positive construction of fatherhood, fathers are viewed as role models, security and protectors (Gonzalez-Lopez, 2004). It was reported that the perception of a loving father who is not rejecting in addition to father pressure for the daughter to achieve were significant factors in adult women being able to depend on their husbands. This perception negatively correlated with young women's level of anxiety about their spouse's commitment and love (Shaver et al, 2000).The quality of adult daughter's relationship with fathers also correlates with self-esteem, comfort with womanhood, and comfort with sexuality and intimacy (Scheffler and Naus, 1999).

It is evident from previous research that the construction of fatherhood has changed over time. This can strongly influence the experience daughters share with their male caregiver and provide a foundation of what to expect in their own romantic relationships. This research aims to address ideas of traditional and modern fatherhood and deconstruct daughter's perceptions of this during adolescence. The study will take inspiration from research by Lehan et al (2011) who examined mother and their adult daughter's perceptions of their relationship. More specifically, the research will examine how daughters use particular discourses to construct images of their fathers. Language will also be analysed in relation to participants own romantic experiences.

Methodology

Philosophical Underpinnings

A qualitative approach was taken for this study as this is specifically concerned with meaning, how people make sense of the world and how they experience events (Willig, 2001). This was particularly applicable to the current research to gain an understanding of the interviewee's perceptions and experiences of their fathers. Qualitative research aims to collect data that is as rich as possible, allowing the researcher to address the research questions and to examine the phenomena (Kumra and Vinnicombe, 2010). Such methodologies are described by Vaismoradi et al (2013) as not just a single research approach but different epistemological perspectives allowing for the collection of rich detailed data. It is important to acknowledge both epistemological and ontological approaches when conducting qualitative analysis.

Epistemological thinking concerns itself with the nature of knowledge and therefore embodies an understanding of what is entailed in knowing (Crotty, 1998). This

research takes on a social constructionist approach encapsulating fluid and changing notions. The study also acknowledges an ontological perspective that considers experience as constituting knowledge of human beings. As a result of the two perspectives and to examine the research accurately, discourse analysis was taken as the appropriate method of analysis.

Participants

As postulated by Krampe (2009) most of the literature on fathers reflects the perspectives of male parents and mothers. In this study, the daughter is viewed as paramount holding the position of the informant of their relationship. The sample consisted of six females all between the ages of 18 and 25. This was purposefully chosen to allow an in depth exploration of father-daughter relationships. All interviews were semi-structured and lasted approximately 30 minutes including further questioning where it was necessary.

Methods

Interviewing

As a tool for interviewing, semi- structured interviews were used as they allowed a more flexible approach to discuss topics of interest with individuals (Noor, 2008).Open-ended questions were used to avoid yes or no answers and encourage the interviewee to give a more in-depth response than what would be expected from structured interviews. According to Willig (2001), the questions asked by the researcher function as 'triggers' that encourage participants to talk and elaborate. Participants being interviewed have the opportunity to ask questions to the interviewer providing focused, conversational, two way communication. Although the primary focus of the interview is indeed the participating individual, it is important to acknowledge that it is the researcher whose research question drives the interview. A balance is required between maintaining control of the interview and its direction, and allowing the interviewee the space to redefine the topic under investigation (Willig, 2001). For full interview schedule, please see Appendix 6.

Thematic analysis

Once interviews were completed and transcribed, thematic analysis served as an extension tool for the process of discourse analysis. Described by Braun and Clarke as 'the first qualitative method of analysis that researchers should learn, it provides core skills useful for conducting many other forms of qualitative analysis' (2006:78). It is further suggested to be seen as a 'foundational method' for qualitative analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006:78). In order to conduct the analysis, this involves familiarising oneself with the data set and identifying key themes within the data that continue to occur. A theme captures something important about the data in relation to the research question, and represents some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set. This seeks to arrive at an understanding of a particular phenomenon from the perspectives of those experiencing it, frequently going further to interpret various aspects of the research topic (Boyatiz, 1998).

Discourse analysis

The research employed discursive analysis as a means of deconstructing the interviews. Discourse analysis indicates a method of data analysis that can inform us about the discursive construction of social reality (Willig, 2001). This involves the conceptualisation of language as constructive and as functional. Language is suggested to be taken by the researcher as social practice as a way of doing things in contrast to the conventional view of language as a tool for description and medium for communication (Wood and Kroger, 2000). Furthermore, it is described by Parker (1992) as reflecting on its own way of speaking granting the ability to attend to different layers of meaning. The researcher is required to examine language in context, concerned with how particular versions of reality are manufactured, negotiated and deployed in conversation (Willig, 2001).

Discursive psychology is social constructionist in orientation. The knowledge it produces is stated by Willig (2001) to focus on how particular constructions are brought into being through the use of interpretive repertoires and discursive devices. Edley (2001) describes three distinctive concepts offered by discursive psychology as tools for analysing spoken discourse: interpretive repertoires, ideological dilemmas and subject positions. These concepts were used as a framework to summarise the findings of my own research.

Interpretive repertoires are defined as 'a lexicon or register of terms and metaphors drawn upon to characterise and evaluate actions and events' (Potter and Wetherell, 1987:138). In discourse analytical terms they are referred to as 'the building blocks of conversation' (Wetherell, 2001:198). The discourse was unravelled in the current study to see if certain discourses are used to construct particular experiences. In Ursual Owens's novel 'Reflections by daughters' (1994) Owen argues fathers represent something beyond intimacy; they represent social power. This links to Foucauldian Discourse Analysis which is concerned with the role of discourse in wider social processes of legitimation and power (Willig, 2001). Dominant discourses privilege those versions of social reality that legitimate existing power relations and social structures. Unlike discursive psychology, primarily concerned with interpersonal communication, Foucauldian Discourse Analysis examines the relationship between discourse and how people think or feel, what they may do and the material conditions within which such experiences may take place. Owen continues to suggest that all discourses produce power relations, highlighting this in terms of romantic discourse. Wilkinson and Kitzinger (1995) expand on this, suggesting romantic texts to be distinguished by forms of closure on many levels often appearing as a form of relief from the search for meaning.

Wetherell et al (2001) postulates that subject positions are the concept that connects the wider notions of discourses and interpretive repertoires to the social construction of particular selves. Participants hail themselves as particular kinds of individuals or subjects; they can be defined quite simply as locations within a conversation. This movement can be seen as interchanging and fluid as participants discuss different experiences. In addition to subject positions and ideological dilemmas, it is important to acknowledge conflicting ideologies within the discourse. Billig et al (1988) argues one of the most crucial features of ideological dilemmas is that they are characterised by inconsistency, fragmentation and contradiction. These tensions and

contradictions were examined in the discourses of daughters when discussing perceptions of their fathers.

Ethical considerations

The research follows the code of ethics and conduct outlined by the British Psychological Society, August (2009). In terms of potential issues surrounding the project, this required sensitivity. When conducting interviews participants were asked to recall memories of relationships with their fathers that they may have previously kept private therefore it was important to be cautious of this. All participants were asked to thoroughly read though an information sheet (See Appendix 3) and if they agreed to the aims of this, were then asked to sign a consent form (See Appendix 2). The participant's identities have not been revealed and any identifying material such as names and addresses have been removed in order to ensure anonymity. Although it is anticipated that the report may be published at a later date, anonymity has been ensured. Following the interviews all participants were offered access to counselling if they felt this was required. For full Ethics Approval Form please see Appendix 5.

Analysis and Discussion

'...the best man you're ever gonna meet is your dad':
Traditional Ideologies of Fatherhood

One of the main objectives of the interviews was to identify how the daughter positioned her father; whether this be as a role model that any other man would have to *'live up to'* or whether this resulted in *'steering away'* from any male that demonstrated even the slightest similarity. When examining this notion, particularly 'traditional' beliefs of fatherhood came from daughters with non – resident fathers. Classified under this term, Becky talks about her views on her father and her expectations of what a father should be:

> *'I wouldn't be surprised if he gets with people behind Sue's back, and I just think it's horrible. That's like everything, that's one of the things I most hate in the world and my dads, not king of it... because I'd like to think he doesn't, I would really like, but I wouldn't be surprised and I just think that's a horrible thing to think of your dad who's supposed to be like... the best man you're ever gonna meet is your dad and it's like really, I always think if you meet someone you'd want to compare them against your dad, but I wouldn't want anyone... in that sense'* (Becky)

During the interview there was hesitation and as demonstrated in the above quote, numerous pauses. Becky positions herself as an idealiser, yet reveals disappointment as she talks about the man she envisioned as the *'best man you're ever gonna meet'.* In failing to meet this standard, rather than positioning her father on a glorified pedestal, numerous tensions and contradictions show a discomfort in revealing her father's flaws.

Describing adultery as *'one of the things I hate most in the world'*, '*that*' is used as an alternative word for adultery and a resistance to associate herself with this. However, a sense of loyalty towards her father is communicated resulting in a conflicting dilemma *'... because I'd like to think he doesn't, I would really like, but I wouldn't be surprised'*. Becky then speaks about traditional comparisons to potential romantic partners. Again, a sadness and disappointment is revealed showing a construction of fatherhood and an expectation of fathers that is embedded.

All of the women interviewed had different experiences of family dynamics and explained how this had influenced their home life. When discussing this with Andy, she described how her father's absence had impacted on her and introduced the concept of lacking a masculine role model:

> *'It probably had an influence on me because like... (pauses). Obviously I just don't have that figure in general, like that figure was lost and that figure was meant to be in people's lives for a reason for like a role model and I never had that masculine role model it was always my mum and like seeing what my mum was doing so I was more into a woman's role if you get what I mean because I was cleaning or cooking. She was at work a lot so I think him not being there I lost out on a relationship with a parent in general because my mum had to make up for all this stuff'* (Andy)

Andy draws on dominant gender ideologies as she describes her experience of growing up as very feminine, presenting women in traditional female roles '*cleaning or cooking'*. This suggests she has perhaps internalised this particular discourse and that if her father had been present this would be more balanced.

Using the term '*lost'*, Andy creates a childlike perception of the father daughter stereotype, creating a careless image of her father's absence perhaps suggesting it has just been misplaced. When making reference to never having a '*masculine role model'* a lack of power and dominance growing up is implied. Andy continues to make reference to traditional ideologies of fatherhood when speaking about her future and the effect her father's absence will have:

> *'I realised no one's ever going to walk me down the aisle in the traditional sense and that's fine whatever like I won't know any different but like if he not going to do that then I just won't have a traditional wedding in general. I don't see the point in inviting family they're not part of my relationship, I'm not reliant on family like other people are'* (Andy)

Social constructions of fatherhood embody broadly public discourses about what constitutes 'good' fathering and legal frameworks that define fathers' relationships with children (White, 1994). Research from this perspective is concerned with identifying the various ways of constructing social reality that are available in a culture. The role of the father 'giving his daughter away' is known to be an exceptionally important and proud moment. This idea is central to the view of the father as a source of security and protection, handing his daughter over to be cared for by another man. During our conversation although Andy opened up, she quickly became defensive, perhaps in an attempt to avoid sympathy. Traces of disappointment can be identified in accepting that this idea of a traditional wedding is unlikely to happen. In doing so, Andy is seen to reconstruct family dynamics,

positioning herself as self-reliant and independent when rebelling against the traditional norm. It is important to acknowledge conflicting dilemmas when conducting a discourse analysis, thus although Andy positions herself in control of this situation, this could also be viewed as a compromise she is forced to make due to an uncontrollable situation.

**'...my dad works so hard to get what he wants and he knows what he wants':
Success, Wealth and Drive**

Despite the perceived potential erosion of the male breadwinner image due to the increasing precarisation and flexibilisation of the labour market (Magaraggia, 2012) the breadwinning image still appears relevant, mentioned several times by many of the women interviewed. Although the traditional view of the father as a provider was not explicitly asked, this was consistently talked about by all of the women. Interviewees appeared to position themselves similar to that of a small child; they expected to be cared for and looked after financially.

Maurer et al (2001) identified father's motivation, skills and availability of family support as factors that facilitated men's involvement with their children. When questioned about Marie's view on her father as a role model, being able to 'provide' was highlighted as a core component for future male partners:

> ' And he will give me everything he can in terms of a roof over my head and if I wanted to do something like if I wanted to go to London or go to China he would support me' (Marie)

> 'I wish they were a bit more approachable. I know peoples parents and like my mum and dad... in Manchester they never come to see me, but on the money side of things they're great. Not very personal...'(Marie)

When making reference to geographical locations, Marie communicates a confidence that despite the increased cost, her father would be happy to provide financial support for this. Linked to her educational needs and future job prospects, a sense of pushing their daughter to reach her greatest potential is seen. Echoing this, Xu et al (2013) concluded that making money was viewed by many fathers as the main avenue to express their love for children and to ensure their daughter's educational success. Marie highlights a desire for her parents to be a *'bit more approachable'* yet rather than challenging this, accepts it as normality within their relationship. This overlaps with a later interpretive repertoire 'approaching the glass barrier.' Becky was another interview who also talked about her father's money orientation:

> '…so just like a silly thing like I had a car, he brought me a car for when I was 17 and I put a little bit of money towards it but when I was at uni it was sat at home and I needed to sell it and use the money for rent for my new house and he kicked off... went mad. I was like how else am I gonna get my hands on so much money I'm not gonna expect you and mum to pay for it so what do you want me to do but then he eventually got over it' (Becky)

Asking her father to sell the car after it was brought as a gift, Becky constructs this as an example of independence needing the financial resources to pay for a house. Whether this can be done, however is left in her father's control. An ideological dilemma emerges from this, presenting the idea of father versus daughter as the provider. In showing her own level of self-sufficiency a shift in power and gender dominance is seen. Despite this, the end result is seen to end in success for Becky as '*he eventually got over it'* encapsulating 'daddy's little girl.'

Leigh was another interviewee who highlighted her father as a central provider within the family:

> '*ummm I don't like his temper, I like his sense of humour, we get on really well, I think he's so funny, he's always making me and my brother and my mum laugh. He's hardworking, he'll do anything he can for me, my brother and my mum like work extra hours to get more money for us for holiday, yeaa just making our lives better and encouraging us'* (Leigh)

Although her father's temper is mentioned first when referring to traits Leigh does not particularly like, this is quickly glossed over and her father's strengths are focused on. The most common depiction of fathers according to Krampe (2009) is how fun they are, and how children share lots of laughs with them. A state of idolisation takes place positioning her father at the centre of the family unit. Leigh draws on dominant gender ideologies as she constructs the father as a masculine provider within the family, working extra hours to make the family holiday possible.

When talking about financial security, all of the women interviewed constructed this as an entirely masculine domain. Positioning their fathers as the financial provider within the family, the women presented this as an already embedded expectation.

'Sometimes normal things, like I think my dad doesn't know about me… but he does': Torn Loyalties: The Doting Daughter

Although some of the women made an acknowledgement of their father's flaws, a defence of this behaviour immediately followed. This resulted in conflicting ideologies, loyalty versus resentment.

> '*But if I ever did need him for anything, he never used to be as good, like but now I know I could count on him for anything like that and that he'd always help me. I suppose he always would of, but his attitudes and I don't know, he's good like that. Things I don't like... errrmmm... it's not that I don't like it because it's just a joke and stuff but sometimes he's quite inappropriate and I think you're my dad. I like having a laugh with him but sometimes I think it's like it's my friend and it is nice to be like that to a point but then...'* (Becky)

When asked about any qualities in her father that Becky particularly did or didn't like, a degree of progression is presented constructing her father as someone who has improved. Stating '*I suppose he always would have'* this acknowledges her own previous poor judgment of her father. His prior '*attitudes'* that would have influenced this opinion are briefly touched on but this is not expanded, perhaps due to loyalty. This is also seen by Becky's positioning of resistance to admit any characteristics

she doesn't enjoy '*it's not that I don't like it...*' When mentioning her father's sometimes '*inappropriate*' behaviour, Becky highlights the title of him as her 'dad' suggesting fathers should act or behave in a certain way, agreed by society. This is then continued with inferences of crossing a boundary, leading more towards friendship. In support of this, Furstenberg and Cherlin (1991) found that fathers who maintain contact after divorce assume a more recreational companionate role with their daughter. Such depictions of the 'fun dad' have been identified in many critical discourses accentuating the father appeal, found to develop a tighter emotional intimacy (Lazer, 2005).

When talking about her father's absence, Andy constructed a balanced view that could perhaps be interpreted as a form of self-protection:

> '*You have to be understanding of it. I'm resentful for him leaving because my life could have been completely different, it could have gone in different ways I've got no idea but it's not worth holding a grudge over just because someone left. Do you know what I mean, like I don't like him for it and ahh that was my point maybe he's doing it as favour like maybe him being in my life wouldn't have been good because he wouldn't have been a good dad, do you know what I mean and sometimes having no dad is better than having a really really shit dad*' (Andy)

Although making an acknowledgement of being resentful, the emotional connection between father and daughter appears to have been removed with Andy's reference to '*just because someone left*', creating distance and a lack of intimacy. Andy resists criticising her father further, instead positioning herself as 'lucky' in this context as '*having no dad is better than having a really really shit dad*'.

Traces of mistrust appeared to surface when some of the women were asked about their own expectations for future relationships based on that of their parents. Within parent child relationships children develop expectations and schemas that they are then able to internalise creating a general model of close relationships. This can then be applied to their own romantic relationship arena (O'Neil and Parke, 2000). Both Becky and Annie appeared to be solving their own dilemmas when answering the given question. This suggests that the women have perhaps internalised their fathers flaws and are holding this as an expectation for their own relationships. The ideological dilemma of trust versus caution can be drawn from this.

> '*I just think my dad's a nightmare, so I think sometimes I probably don't expect anything... not don't expect anything better.... because I would want something better and I wouldn't want someone to treat me like that but I think that probably makes it more difficult for me to talk to people... like if I was to be in a relationship with someone, I never have been properly so I think I'm very like...*' (Becky)

In not expecting anything, Becky puts this down to her father who she describes as a '*nightmare*'. The increasing inadequacy of handed down role models is something that is also highlighted by Gregory and Milner (2011). Positioning herself as a victim, Becky shows a strong desire to avoid anything similar to her father's previous actions but acknowledges this as a potential barrier which may cause an issue when

in or approaching relationships. As Becky trailed off, she made the agreement of being *'cautious'* when asked about her feelings surrounding this. Such trust issues have been highlighted by Victoria Secunda in her book 'Women and their fathers' (1992). This suggests those women who do not feel affirmed by their fathers develop a tendency to respond to men in their lives as they once responded to their father: they seek intimacy but are unable to believe men can be trusted so always remain on guard.

A similar situation is reflected in Annie's speech. When trailing off, this was not prompted further due the questions being particularly emotional for the interviewee. Showing confusion surrounding her personal feelings, the use of the term '*little*' suggests that although some difference is expected in future relationships, this isn't to a great extent. When making reference to the lack of affection her father shows, emotional absence appeared to be a central theme in the interview, emphasising a desire for more of a traditional relationship.

> ' *I wouldn't expect, or would I expect...I think I would think things to be a little bit different from my mum and dad's relationship, he doesn't show her affection much so I wouldn't...'* (Annie)

'…some things you don't talk to your dad about':
Approaching the Glass Barrier

Many of the women interviewed consistently mentioned the approachability and openness of their fathers. Although many talked about a desire for more of a companionship, rather than being challenged this was accepted as a traditional norm.

> *'ermm I don't share... If my mum asks questions about emotions and stuff like that then I'll answer them but I won't offer it up without being asked, I'd probably offer more up to my dad, but some things you don't talk to your dad about'* (Jane)

Although research in the West suggests that fathers are less emotionally involved with their children than mothers (O'Brien, 2005) this idea is shunned by Jane favouring her father as a source of emotional support. This runs parallel to the changing constructions of fatherhood and an embracement of the 'new man' (Williams, 2008). Despite acknowledgements of this, more traditional models of fatherhood can still be seen to dominate the discourse, exemplified by Marie:

> *'Well I never told them about the make ups and break ups with Kieran ever. They're just not interested. I've got the perfect example, Kieran's parents would be like to me, if it was my birthday they'd buy me presents and get me cards. Invite me round to family get togethers, I don't think my parents even knew Kieran's birthday.'* (Marie)
> *'We just weren't close, my mum and dad they don't really... they don't know a lot about me. They know a lot about my uni work and stuff, but I speak to my dad a lot more often now. He'll ring me like 3 times a week...'*(Marie)

Comparing a previous partner's family to the emotional closeness of her own, Marie communicates a desire for a more personal relationship. This is enforced with reference to only one dimension of parental concern regarding '*uni work and stuff*'. Rather than accepting this, Marie is presented as striving to seek the relationship she desired. This however, is male led, placing her father in a position of control.

The changing models of fatherhood run parallel to the perceptions daughters hold of their fathers. Although the 'new man' embodying the emotional availability of fathers is seen in the research, the traditional ideologies of fatherhood still appear to dominate the women's discourses. Most popular, and perhaps to be expected was the traditional 'breadwinner' talked about by all of the women interlaced with their answers. This construction of the father as the provider was a position that appeared to come as an expectation from all of the women interviewed. These ideas of what being a father should entail were social constructionist in nature, derived from what society has produced. Most commonly, disappointment was echoed by many of the women; the daughters were faced with the challenge of accepting their father for his flaws but still continued to seek the relationship they so desperately sought after. Regarding the interviewees' personal romantic relationships, the consensus was that this was an area not to be approached with fathers or surprisingly, mothers. The majority of women viewed their personal relationships as something that was only disclosed to their close peer groups due to the 'embarrassment' of sharing this with family members. Specifically, women who had witnessed breakdowns and flaws in their parent's relationship had indeed internalised these and accepted this as something that may happen in their own relationships.

Regarding the analysis, utilisation of the methodology has allowed me to draw conclusions from the deconstruction of daughter's perceptions. Discourse analysis has proved a successful method of examination, granting me the ability to explore these experiences and language with flexibility. As social constructionism is a fluid and changing notion, future research would need to adapt to potential changes in fatherhood to continue producing up to date research.

Reviewing existing literature, an area that was noticeably weak, regarded family loyalties. This would be a particularly interesting area to examine and should be recommended for future family research. As the current study examined Western representations of fatherhood, extensions into different cultures to see if any discourses remain consistent could also be a further area to build on.

Reflexive Analysis

It is important that the author of the discourse considers the position they hold within the discourses they are describing. There are three core concepts that need to be considered when reflecting on a piece of qualitative research, these are; the topics that have been investigated, the perspectives and experiences of the people that are included in the research and the audiences who will study the findings (Gilgun, 2012:125). As a female who has shares an excellent relationship with her father, this was the inspiration for the current research. As I had not personally experienced some of the dilemmas that arose in the study, I was in an objective position to

analyse the perceptions without personal bias. Although I have not experienced such dilemmas, I was aware of the sensitive nature and possible upset this may cause so a degree of sensitivity was required. This was particularly relevant when relationships were revealed that had not been expected. The women were specifically asked to take part in the interviews as I already had good knowledge of the relationships they shared with their fathers. This pre-existing rapport was utilised to create a more comfortable and open atmosphere for the women when discussing their experiences.

Concluding this report, the research may create considerable advancements regarding improvements in relationships between father and daughter. This will provide similarities and differences in behaviour that men approaching this stage with their own daughters will be able to identify and perhaps even begin adopting.

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