

Single, Stay-at-Home, and Gay Fathers' Perspectives of their Children's Outdoor Risky Play

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THESIS

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Abstract

Parental perspectives on risk and danger are important to consider in children's injury prevention research, as they influence children's adoption of safety strategies and influence how children approach risk and danger (Brussoni & Olsen, 2011). Despite single, stay-at-home, and gay fathers' increasing numbers and the important roles they play in their children's development, there has been a lack of research on their perspectives on children's engagement in outdoor risky play until now. This thesis is written in the publishable paper format and is comprised of two papers, which were informed by poststructural feminist theory. In the first paper, I used semi-structured and photo-elicitation interviews and critical discourse analysis to explore single, stay-at-home, and gay fathers' perspectives of their 4-12 year old children's engagement in outdoor risky play and how they relate to tension-filled discourses of "good" fathering. In the second paper, I also used semi-structured and photo-elicitation interviews, but I explored single, stay-at-home, and gay fathers' perspectives of masculinity and its influence on their understanding of their children's outdoor risky play. Taken together, the findings from both papers showcase the important roles that single, stay-at-home, and gay fathers play in their children's outdoor risky play.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

In the past, mothers were considered to be the primary influences on their children's safety, as well as the primary caregiver in the family (Brussoni & Olsen, 2011). This discursively produced link between motherhood and caregiving has resulted in caregiving in general being perceived as a motherly concern (Doucet, 2006a). Traditional feminine discourses thus situate caregiving as overtly feminine and motherly and, in contrast, situate emotional reserve and a lack of caregiving as masculine and fatherly. Child safety is heavily tied to gendered perceptions of parenthood through the feminization of caring and motherhood and the masculinization of fatherhood and emotional reserve (Brussoni, Olsen, Creighton, & Oliffe, 2013). Thus, safety is typically considered a feminine concern (Doucet, 2006a, 2006b).

The focus on mothers in safety research has resulted in very little research on fathers' perceptions of outdoor risky play and their roles in children's safety (Brussoni, Creighton, Olsen, & Oliffe, 2013). In the past few decades, researchers have started to address this deficit by including fathers in child safety research, presenting their perspectives on topics like safety, fatherhood, and play (Brussoni et al., 2013; Morrongiello, Walpole, & McArthur, 2009; Brussoni, Olsen, Pike, & Sleet, 2012). The results of these studies have shown a strong indication of the intimate connection that many fathers have to their children, and it has also illuminated fathers' abilities to mitigate children's experiences of injury (Olsen, Oliffe, Brussoni, & Creighton, 2013), promote risky play activities (Brussoni & Olsen, 2013), and influence children's adoption of safety strategies in outdoor environments (Brussoni et al., 2013). While previous research has examined mothers' and fathers' perspectives on outdoor risky play, little research has considered the perspectives of minority fathers (e.g., single, stay-at-home, and gay). The understanding of parents' roles in children's safety thus remains incomplete.

While research on outdoor risky play has been conducted with fathers, this research has focused on the perspectives of traditional fathers (e.g., work away from home and are heterosexual and who are secondary caregivers). The research that has looked at single, stay-at-home, and gay fathers' perspectives of their children's play focused on fathers' perspectives of embodiment of physical play during play and has not examined fathers' perspectives on topics like masculinity, fatherhood, and outdoor risky play in general (Doucet, 2006a). Single, stay-at-home, and gay fathers challenge perspectives of traditional fatherhood through the care they provide to their children as primary caregivers and as men who engage in traditionally feminine chores and duties (such as cooking and cleaning) (Doucet, 2004b; Messner, 1997).

In the research described in this thesis, I used feminist methodologies, feminist poststructural theory, and discourse analysis to explore 12 single, stay-at-home, and gay fathers' perspectives of their 4-12 year old children's outdoor risky play. My first paper addressed the question, "What are single, stay-at-home, and gay fathers' perspectives of their 4-12 year old children's outdoor risky play behaviour and how do they relate to discourses of good fathering?" My second paper addressed the question, "Do single, stay-at-home, and gay fathers' perspectives of masculinity influence their understandings of their 4-12 year old children's outdoor risky play behaviour?" This research was the first of its kind to examine single, stay-at-home, and gay fathers' perspectives on risky outdoor play. It thus offers an important opportunity to explore important perspectives on the related topics of fatherhood, masculinity, and child safety and to bridge a gap in knowledge that exists between the fields of family dynamics and child injury prevention.

Literature Review

In recent times, concerns about children's safety have been at forefront of Western parenting discourses (Tremblay et al., 2015). Due to phenomena such as overprotective parenting, hypervigilance, and an overall access to safety information, now more than ever, children's outdoor play occurs with adult influence and supervision (Tremblay et al., 2015). While this may help to mitigate some of the injuries that children experience, children may be prevented from engaging in play activities that promote exploration and risky play (Tremblay et al., 2015). The decline in unsupervised and risky outdoor play during the past twenty years has resulted in children playing closer to home and fewer children playing in the streets, forests, and playgrounds (Brussoni et al., 2012; Brussoni & Olsen, 2011; Tremblay et al., 2015). Indeed, there are great differences in how children presently play compared to how their parents played when they were young. The restrictions and prohibitions of where and how children can play are tied to discourses of parenting that are (re)produced by the media and contribute to discussions of what makes someone a good or bad parent (Brussoni, Olsen, Pike, & Sleet, 2012; Ungar, 2009). While coddling and hyper-vigilance may have been considered inappropriate in the past, these practices are now heavily tied to discourses of good parenting (Ungar, 2009). If parents are not protective of their children, they may face harsh judgements (Hoffman, 2007). Thus, the prioritization of children's safety is no longer solely the concern of child safety advocates in health, education, and school practices – they are now the concerns of parents and broader society (Hoffman, 2007; Tremblay et al., 2015).

Scholarly interest in outdoor risky play stems from the fact that such play experiences provide unique opportunities for children to engage with their environment. Children who engage in outdoor risky play are able to grow mentally, physically, and socially, by learning how to navigate unpredictable risks and dangers through problem solving and solution building

(Brussoni et al., 2012). Outdoor environments, especially when compared to household settings, can offer limitless potential for children to explore the natural world, learn about properties of objects, and further learn how to approach simple tasks (Cecilani & Bortolotti, 2013). Outdoor environments also allow children to play in very creative ways, where they can extend and use their bodies freely and openly (Cecilani & Bortolotti, 2013). Indeed, there is consensus from health advocates that children must and should play outdoors (Tremblay et al., 2015).

In line with this, recent research has resulted in the release of the Position Statement on Active Outdoor Play (Tremblay et al., 2015). This statement was released due to the increased worry from health advocates that children are not spending enough time in active outdoor play. The authors and stakeholders hoped to inform parents and families of the benefits of active outdoor play, including partaking in risky play (Tremblay et al., 2015). It was the hope of these researchers that parents and families would understand that allowing children to engage in outdoor active and risky play is necessary for healthy child development (Tremblay et al., 2015). Thus, the Position Statement itself was the result of a call-to-action that the authors felt was necessary to address the increasingly risk-adverse society in which children are raised.

Addressing children's participation in outdoor risky play requires a strong understanding of parents' roles in promoting this kind of play. To date, however, the literature on outdoor risky play has excluded single, stay-at-home, and gay fathers. Importantly, the rate of single fathers in Canada is increasing at an even higher rate than single mothers (Statistics Canada, 2011a). Further, in 2015, 1 in 10 stay-at-home parents were stay-at-home fathers (Statistics Canada, 2011b), and the number of same-sex couples has tripled since the legalization of same-sex marriage in Canada (Statistics Canada, 2011a). Single, stay-at-home, and gay fathers must thus

be included in research, as their roles in their families reflect the continual changes in Canadian parenting demographics.

Understanding My Place as a Researcher

I believe it is important for researchers to acknowledge who we are and to take time to reflect on our place in research. When approaching this research, I first needed to reflect on the fact that I do not identify as a man, I am not homosexual or gender queer, and I am not a parent. I thus did not have a similar identity to those who participated in my research. I am, nonetheless, interested in this area of research due to my desire to promote equity and equality in research and in child injury prevention. In order to establish comfort, trust, and connectedness with potential research participants, I participated in various community events with participants. Further, I joined various gay, single, and stay-at-home online groups to read newsletters and gain access to information on single, stay-at-home, and gay father communities. I also volunteered at the Canadian Centre for Gender and Sexual Diversity for a period of three months, where I learned more about issues that gay men face on a day-to-day basis. I spent time outside of the interview process speaking with the fathers who had participated and sitting for coffee and discussion on related topics. While, certainly, I do not claim that I fully understand the lives and perspectives of the participants in my research, I do believe that I gained a level of enhanced understanding and sensitivity that enabled me to conduct my research in an ethical and empathetic manner.

Below, I outline the scholarly approach that I took to my research, which included a social constructionist epistemology, feminist methodologies, poststructural feminist theory, critical discourse analysis, semi-structured interviews, and photo-elicitation interviews.

Epistemology

I employed a social constructionist approach to explore single, stay-at-home, and gay fathers' perspectives of their children's outdoor risky play. According to social constructionism, the way we perceive and understand human nature is culturally and historically dependent (Crotty, 1998a). According to Crotty (1998a), meaning is derived from the social world and developed through the interactions people have with one another. A fundamental belief engrained in social constructionism is the notion that consciousness is determined by social beings who acclimatize to their cultural and social environments (Crotty, 1998a). Further, social constructionists use critical insights to acknowledge and challenge dominant social thought that objectifies, ostracizes, and subjugates populations of people (Crotty, 1998a). The use of social constructionism thus provided me with a foundation for understanding how single, stay-at-home, and gay fathers construct their understandings outdoor risky play, masculinity, and fatherhood.

Theoretical Framework

Poststructural feminist theory is derived from the work of Derrida, Lacan, Kristeva, Althusser, and Foucault (Weedon, 1988). Poststructuralists posit that there is no fixed reality (Gavey, 2011) and that, instead, a person's construction of their social reality is derived from historical, cultural, and societal contexts that are continually changing (Weedon, 1988). Jackson (2001) stated, "The social structures and processes that shape our subjectivities are situated within discursive fields where language, social institutions, subjectivity, and power exist, intersect, and produce competing ways of giving meaning to and constructing subjectivity" (p. 386). The self and how one identifies as a person are thus not concrete; they change expand depending on cultural, historical, and social circumstances (Jackson, 2001; Weedon, 1988). Embedded in poststructural feminist discussions is an emphasis on the construction and (re)production of meaning through language, discourse, and power relations.

According to poststructural feminists, language is derived from the historical period, culture, and society in which an individual lives and is a site where consciousness and identity are developed (Weedon, 1988). Further, language is a means of (re)producing and creating meaning (Weedon, 1988). Thus, how one talks about an object, person, or circumstance can illuminate one's position relative to the topic of discussion. The utilization of language is hence considered a gateway into greater societal discourses that shape the way that people act and react (Weedon, 1988). Language can also illuminate important power relations that exist in society by bringing key issues to the forefront of discussion (Weedon, 1988). Importantly, language creates meaning of the self and subjectivity that is unique to the discourses and societal norms to which an individual is subjected (Cassidy, Goldberg, & Aston, 2016). Thus, studying an individual's language use is important to further understanding what is considered meaningful to him/her (Carbin & Edenheim, 2013; Weedon, 1988). It is an excellent means to explore how language cultivates social realities and how language can be used to perpetuate and challenge dominant and subjugated discourses (O'Byrne & Holmes, 2010). Language is used to further situate ideologies in the discursive field (Weedon, 1988).

The discursive field was conceptualized by Foucault as "an attempt to understand the relationship between language, social institutions, subjectivity and power" (Weedon, 1988, p. 35). Thus, discursive fields represent ways in which meanings are enacted and constructed. The discursive field extends beyond the social world and encompasses political and governmental structures (Weedon, 1988). Discursive fields, especially those that embed relevant social issues, are constructed through thorough discussion on important ideological concepts (Weedon, 1988). Consequently, the discursive field encompasses many competing and intertwining discourses that construct the world we experience (Weedon, 1988).

Discourses can be (re)produced in material form (e.g., such as text) or enacted through practice and ultimately represent people, places, topics, and ideologies (Hardy & Maguire, 2016). They contribute to constructing the world around us by giving it meaning (Hardy & Maguire, 2016). Dominant (also known as traditional) discourses reflect common and typical means of speaking, writing, and enacting these immaterial or material objects and ideologies (Hardy & Maguire, 2016). Accordingly, dominant discourses are constructed through common societal ideologies and reflect what is perceived as natural or normal and can result in a general accepted truth. The knowledge that results from these dominant discourses “is produced by those constructed as authoritative figures, and as a result of conforming to accepted procedures and protocols” (Hardy & Maguire, 2016, p. 84). Consequentially, individuals who conform to dominant discourses or adopt the ideologies embedded in them can speak and act in ways to exercise power, while those that do not conform to the same ideologies are not always able to exercise power in the same ways (Hardy & Maguire, 2016). Thus, the relationship between discourse and power is cyclical, with power contributing to the construction of discourse, and discourse challenging, enabling, and perpetuating power (Hardy & Maguire, 2016).

According to Foucault (1997), people do not possess power; rather, they exercise it. As a result, poststructural feminist theorists posit that it is crucial to understand how power struggles and power relations exist in social contexts (Weedon, 1988). Power relations influence behavioural and societal norms and often perpetuate or challenge dominant discourses surrounding what to expect from someone in a social setting (Pringle, 2005). Indeed, power relations are sites of struggle or resistance where individuals challenge, perpetuate, or reform certain ideologies (Weedon, 1988). While one can exert power against larger governmental organizations in forms such as protests, power can also be exercised in the form of silence and

resisting or challenging greater societal discourses (Weedon, 1988). Importantly, language and power relations are heavily tied to fluid societal discourses that are continually being reshaped and redefined (Weedon, 1988).

Poststructural feminist theorists' sensitivity to difference and demand for the inclusion of subjugated voices (Weedon, 1988) rendered it an appropriate choice for my research. I used this theory to understand the discourses produced by single, stay-at-home, and gay fathers about their children's risky play recognize their typically subjugated voices in a discursive field that has privileged mothers' and traditional fathers' perspectives for too long (Bozett, 1989). Indeed, as Weedon (1988) noted, poststructural feminist theory can be used to challenge dominant discourses, such as those relevant to the research at hand: child safety, masculinity, and fatherhood.

Feminist Methodology

Feminist methodologists challenge research that prioritizes one population's knowledge over another's (Hesse-Biber, Leavy, & Yaiser, 2004). These methodologists posit that all knowledge has a place in research, and that it is only by promoting varying perspectives that there can be better representativeness in research (Hesse-Biber et al., 2004). I argue that a feminist methodology was best suited for my research because it is an excellent way to better understand individuals' perspectives as they relate to context, truth production, diversity, and struggle (Hesse-Biber et al., 2004).

Importantly, researchers who use feminist methodology have argued that social life is gendered; thus, understanding the influences of gender is crucial to further understanding how people live their lives (Landman, 2006). Historically, feminist methodology was employed to include women's knowledge in research (Landman, 2006); however, in more recent years, it has

been used to examine any knowledge that has been subjugated by dominant masculine forms of knowledge (Gardiner, 2004; Silverstein, 1996). Although there are different types of feminist methodologies, they all share similar concern for promoting equality in research and society in general (Crotty, 1998).

Feminist methodology has a long history of challenging oppressive gender and sex discourses (Taylor, 1998). Advocates for this methodology attempt to correct oppressive imbalances concerning men and women. Nevertheless, it has been argued that this attempt to correct gender imbalances is a weakness and not a strength in that it pre-establishes a preference for gender over other perhaps more important factors in research, such as societal beliefs and values (Hammersley, 1992). Another argument against feminist methodology is its apparent inability to operationalize what it is (Hussain & Asad, 2012).

While feminist methodology has its weaknesses, its strengths are numerous. Although there exist many forms of feminist knowledge that influence feminist methodology, I argue that its variety of forms and thus flexibility make it a strong tool to foster representativeness in research from a multitude of disciplines. Although feminist methodologists emphasize gender sensitivity, they aim to represent all subjugated perspectives (Hesse-Biber et al., 2004). Thus, this does not pre-establish a preference for gender and sex; instead, it promotes the consideration of gender and sex as important social factors to explore in research. Although there are many ways to operationalize it, it is recurrently recognized as a gender-sensitive approach to research (Abu-Laban, 2015; Landman, 2006; Shpungin, Allen, Loomis, & DelloStritto, 2012). Fonow and Cook (2014) argued that one of the greatest strengths of feminist methodology is the way it supports social change in society by challenging methodologies in research that are not representative of minority, oppressed, ostracized, or subjugated voices.

I used these strengths in my study with single, stay-at-home, and gay fathers, as these populations are continually trying to have their voices heard along side their traditional father counterparts in discursive fields concerning fatherhood. Feminist methodology allowed me to work within a framework that critically appraised gender in research and allowed me to be sensitive to participants' lived experiences.

Methods

Participant Recruitment and Procedure

I had originally sought to explore the perspectives of same-sex fathers of 6 – 12 year old children and to interview partner dyads. I contacted many agencies, support networks, and attended various community events for gay fathers. The people I met with all told me that it would be very difficult to recruit enough same-sex fathers to participate in this research for several reasons: 1) same-sex fathers are not prioritized by adoption agencies to adopt children and thus there are very few male same-sex couples with children; 2) same-sex fathers are only now being considered by adoption agencies, so same-sex fathers typically have very young children (< 4 years old); 3) same-sex fathers are often asked by many researchers at any given time to participate in studies due to their small population, which results in same-sex fathers feeling overburdened and less likely to participate in research; 4) same-sex fathers face many anxieties when participating in research because they are afraid of their identities being revealed. After discussing these issues with some of same-sex fathers I met and after encountering extreme difficulty in recruiting same-sex fathers, I realized that it would be impossible to recruit enough same-sex fathers for my master's thesis research in the time period available to complete my thesis. After months of trying to recruit them, I decided that it would be best to change the recruitment requirements. Further, though I started by attempting to recruit fathers who had at

least one child in the 6-12 age range, I realized that the 4-12 age range would be more suitable. This age range was selected because children between 4-6 years of age engage with preschool-based play that provides unstructured free play outdoors and promotes physical activity (Cardon, Van Cauwenberghe, Labarque, Haerens, & De Bourdeaudhuij, 2008), while children in the 6-12 age range learn safety strategies, how to approach risky and dangerous situations and avoid injuries, and fair and safe play (Van Mechelen & Verhagen, 2005). The 4-12 age range is thus an important time in children's lives when they are learning about risks, safety strategies, social contexts, and environmental navigation during outdoor play. I also changed the recruitment criterion on the kind of father who could participate in the study to who are single, stay-at-home, or gay, as all of these fathers are marginalized within discourses of fatherhood and in research concerning children's outdoor risky play. Further selection criteria included that the participants had to be proficient in the English language; considered themselves to be primary caregivers or had joint-custody of their children; and had at least one child aged 4-12.

I engaged in a number of recruitment strategies: I posted flyers around Ottawa and Montreal; sent recruitment posters to various single, stay-at-home, and gay father organizations or related community organizations in Ottawa, Montreal, and Toronto; I attended various community events for single, stay-at-home, and gay fathers in Ottawa and Montreal; and I contacted fathers who fit the recruitment criteria and were public figures online (e.g., a well-known stay-at-home father who is a blogger) through e-mail or Facebook messages. When I successfully recruited fathers, I then used snowball sampling (Cohen & Arieli, 2010) and contacted other interested fathers over e-mail or over the phone. When fathers indicated interest in participating, I sent them the study information over e-mail or explained the study over the phone. If they agreed to participate, I sent them the participant consent form and arranged to

meet with them either in person at various locations (e.g., local coffee shops) or over Skype. I interviewed a total of 12 fathers: 6 single (3 primary custody, 3 joint custody, all heterosexual), 4 stay-at-home (all heterosexual with partners who work away from home), and 2 gay fathers (who were co-parenting with gay men who did not wish to participate in the study). All participants completed consent forms prior to participating in the study. All participants except one are white, with the exception being a stay-at-home father (Mark), who is Asian-Canadian.

Table 1

Participant Information and Number of Interviews

Pseudo-Name	Semi-Structured Interview	Photo-Elicitation Interview	Single, Stay-at-Home, or Gay	Age of Children (S = Son, D = Daughter)
Jake	YES	YES	Single	D: 11, D: 13, D: 15
Peter	YES	NO	Single	S: 3, S: 6
John	YES	YES	Single	D: 2, D: 4
Brent	YES	NO	Single	D: 11, S: 20, S: 40, S: 45, D: 30, D: 30
Adam	YES	YES	Single	S: 4, S: 6
Ben	YES	NO	Single	S: 6, S: 9
Michel	YES	NO	Stay-at-Home	S: 2, S: 4
Brad	YES	NO	Stay-at-Home	D: 8, D: 11
Mark	YES	YES	Stay-at-Home	S: 7, S: 9

Kyle	YES	YES	Stay-at-Home	D: 5, S: 9, S: 11
West	YES	NO	Gay	S: 8, S: 10
Luke	YES	YES	Gay	S: 5, D: 5

To examine single, stay-at-home, and gay fathers' perspectives on outdoor risky play, I used two exploratory qualitative research methods: semi-structured interviews (Gill, Stewart, Treasure, & Chadwick, 2008) and photo-elicitation interviews (Richard & Lahman, 2015).

Semi-Structured Interviews

Interviews are an excellent way to gain insight into participants' experiences (Fontana & Frey, 2005), as they provide a setting for in-depth discussion concerning topics of interest (Leydon et al., 2000). Choosing the most appropriate type of interview is important. For my research, I used semi-structured interviews. In these interviews, researchers follow a set of pre-established guidelines that involve the questions they will ask (Drever, 1995). The lack of total freedom to discuss topics that surface during interviews can be a weakness for the semi-structured interview method; however, I argue that even if semi-structured interviews do not involve total freedom for the researcher, there is still a degree of freedom for the researcher to ask open-ended, probing questions following interesting or meaningful responses (Drever, 1995). Semi-structured interviews provided a way for me, as a researcher, to have pre-established questions that directly related to outdoor risky play, masculinity, and fatherhood, while still allowing participants to feel comfortable answering in a way that suited them. Using semi-structured interviews, I was able to examine each parent's perspective on his child's or children's outdoor risky play behaviours and how they relate to masculinity and fatherhood. Examples of questions asked during the semi-structured interview included 1) Has your child ever been

injured playing outdoors?; 2) When your child plays outdoors, do you ever feel worried about how they're playing or who/what they're playing with?; 3) How do you feel about letting your child play alone or without supervision?; 4) In your own words, what makes someone a good parent?; 5) What does the word "masculine" mean to you?; 6) Does your child ever participate in outdoor play that you think is risky?

I conducted one semi-structured interview with each father (for a total of 12 semi-structured interviews). When the fathers had more than one child in the age range for the study, I asked questions about each child. When the fathers had one child who was within the 4-12 age range and other children who were not, I asked my questions specifically about the child within the 4-12 age range. Following the first interview, I asked participants if they wanted to participate in the second interview, which was a photo-elicitation interview.

Photo-Elicitation Interviews

Richard and Lahman (2015) argued that, "adding photographs during an interview not only provides a way to elicit additional information, but this interviewing technique also offers a visual dimension to the unobservable thoughts, feelings, experiences, and understandings...for using interviewing methods in the first place" (p. 4). Photo-elicitation interviews can have an important role in social research due to their profound ability to illuminate significant and personal experiences, as well as to further explore unobservable phenomena (Richard & Lahman, 2015).

Researchers who use photo-elicitation must make ethical decisions concerning who and what will be present in the photographs taken by participants (Richard & Lahman, 2015), as well as how the photographs will consequently be used by both the researcher and participant (e.g., used for informational gain, research, or personal use) (Gold, 2007). Further, researchers must

consider what skill the participant photographer has in taking photos (e.g., is the participant capable of taking photographs relevant to the topic, and is s/he familiar with technology?), the time and cost necessary to use photo-elicitation techniques, and whether or not the photographs taken show people's faces or personal identifiers (e.g. house addresses, car licence plates, etc.) (Richard & Lahman, 2015).

One of the strengths of using photo-elicitation techniques in qualitative research is that it empowers participants by allowing them the freedom to capture their experiences in photographs (Richard & Lahman, 2015). When they are later interviewed and asked questions pertaining to their experiences, they can use the photographs they took to further explore how they feel about what occurred. Being able to hold and access their photographs allows participants to feel comforted and the consequent dialogues about the people, objects, and situations depicted in the photographs can reveal underlying thoughts and understandings about participants' experiences. (Richard & Lahman, 2015) Moreover, Suchar (1989) posited that a strength of photo-elicitation interviews is the capacity they have to reveal participants' understanding of the culture in which they live. Further, researchers can choose to use a photo-elicitation interview method "to sharpen memories, to provide focus for the interview, to ameliorate awkward interview situations, to enable participants to formalize abstractions and generalizations, and to promote participant agency" (Richard & Lahman, 2015, p. 6). I capitalized on these strengths in my photo-elicitation interviews with single, stay-at-home, and gay fathers, as this interview format provided a robust method to reveal important perspectives that same-sex fathers have on their children's outdoor risky play; however, it is important for me to acknowledge that there remain limitations to using this method. According to Richard and Lahman (2015), researchers may be restricting participants during photo-elicitation interviews to discuss particular moments in time, which can

limit participants' perspectives on a topic. Further, if moments captured in photographs depict emotional or painful circumstances, the participant may re-live the associated trauma (Richard & Lahman, 2015). To mitigate these drawbacks, I recurrently asked participants if they were comfortable speaking about the moments they captured in the photographs and reiterated the fact that they could stop participating in any part of the research if they feel they needed to stop.

The fathers who were interested in participating in the study (3 single, 2 stay-at-home, and 1 gay) were given a copy of the child assent form for their children to sign or for them to read to younger children who were not capable of reading the form themselves. The participants who did not wish to participate in the photo-elicitation interview stated they could not participate for the following reasons: 1) they did not have further time to spare for the study; 2) their children did not play outside enough during the winter season for them to take photographs; or 3) that they did not want to take photographs. I instructed the participants who expressed interest in participating in the photo-elicitation interview to take 10 photographs of their children participating in behaviours that the participants perceived as risky and non-risky play outdoor play behaviours. I told the participants that I would blur any photographs used in presentations to obscure the children's faces or other identifying information. All participants who chose to participate in the photo elicitation interview used their cell phones or tablets to take photographs. Further, three participants chose to bring photographs to the photo elicitation interview that they had been taken before participating in the study instead of new photographs; however, in these photographs, at least one child was within the necessary age range for the study.

For the photo elicitation interview, I met with the interested fathers and followed a set of pre-established semi-structured interview questions, while probing further into important insights and allowing participants to provide information that they deemed relevant and related to the

topic. I asked questions about the photographs that participants brought to the interview pertaining to safety, risky play, and danger. Examples of questions asked were 1) Were there any recurring play behaviours that you found risky?; 2) Why did you consider these behaviours or circumstances risky?; 3) Was your child ever injured when s/he engaged in these behaviours? Participants were free to share stories that they found relevant and relating to the photographs. Thus, the photographs served as a frame of reference for participants and often helped participants remember key aspects (e.g., environments, situations, etc.) of the stories that they shared when providing their perspectives.

I digitally audio recorded all interviews and transcribed them verbatim. I sent all participants copies of their transcribed interviews and asked if they would like to change, omit, or revise any part of the documents. Only one participant made a small change to add additional clarification to a point that he had made.

Analysis

To analyze the data I gathered from these methods, I used critical discourse analysis (CDA) supported by NVivo10™ software. CDA is an excellent tool to explore the processes of social change and how these may emanate from oppressive or dominant discourses (Fairclough et al., 2011). According to Fairclough, Mulderrig, and Wodak (2011), critical discourse analysts are interested in “the semiotic dimensions of power, injustice, abuse, and politic-economic or culture change in society” (p. 357). Thus, critical discourse analysts explore how meaning is produced and socially shaped (Fairclough et al., 2011). Further, critical discourse analysts use CDA as a tool to examine political, cultural, and societal differences. The differentiating factor between CDA and other forms of analysis is that it “openly and explicitly positions itself on the side of dominated and oppressed groups and against dominating groups” (Fairclough et al., 2011,

p. 358). CDA thus becomes an excellent tool to use to gain understanding of the hardships, turmoil, and prejudices faced by minority populations. Further, critical discourse analysts have argued that language can produce social experiences that are derived from cultural and societal consensus of what is expected and valued (Fairclough et al., 2011). Analysing discourses is thus an excellent way to further understand the subjugated perspectives of sexual minority populations (Heitner, Muenks, & Sherman, 2015).

There are many strengths of using CDA in qualitative research: uncovering relevant and important social issues; revealing critical issues through linguistic materials such as written and spoken text; representing subjugated opinions and beliefs; examining the line between the privileged and non-privileged voices in current historical and societal contexts; identifying ways of being, doing, and signifying topics like gender, class, identity, and governmentality; and emphasizing the need to explore power and discourse in greater society (Mogashoa, 2014). Conversely, there are some weaknesses to using CDA: findings can be misinterpreted because meaning is subject to change, and challenging widely held beliefs can cause discomfort and can result in a disruption of perspectives (Mogashoa, 2014). Ultimately, the many strengths of using CDA made it a robust approach for my research with single, stay-at-home, and gay fathers.

Willig (2003) identified six stages to effectively use critical discourse analysis to understand participants' experiences. I followed Willig's (2003) stages: 1) I familiarized myself with the texts (i.e., photos and transcripts) to identify participants and constructed fatherhood, masculinity, and outdoor risky play discourses; 2) I examined how all participants and their children were constructed across the texts and whether or not these constructions differed; 3) I compared the identified discourses to further examine how they related to each other; 4) I examined how each participant was positioned relative to each discourse; 5) I examined if the

participant's position relative to the discourses influenced opportunities for action; 6) I explored how each participant's experiences and perspectives related to these discursive positions. Thus, I was able to better understand participants' perspectives on their children's outdoor risky play behaviour and how they related to good fathering (Paper 1) and how these perspectives were influenced by participants' perspectives of masculinity (Paper 2).

Thesis Format

My thesis was written using the "publishable paper format." My first paper addressed the question, "What are single, stay-at-home, and gay fathers' perspectives of their 4-12 year old children's outdoor risky play behaviour and how do they relate to discourses of good fathering?" My second paper addressed the question, "Do single, stay-at-home, and gay fathers' perspectives of masculinity influence their understandings of their 4-12 year old children's outdoor risky play behaviour?" Taken together, these two papers make an important contribution to addressing a gap in knowledge that exists between the fields of injury prevention and family dynamics. Importantly, these papers are the first to examine single, stay-at-home, and gay fathers' perspectives on risky play and masculinity in injury prevention research. It is my hope that this research can inform future studies on fathers' roles in children's safety.

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Chapter 2:

Single, Stay-at-Home, and Gay Fathers' Perspectives on their 4-12 Year Old Children's

Outdoor Risky Play Behaviour and How it Relates to "Good" Fathering

Parents play an important role in their children's understanding of safety. Indeed, parents who teach their children about hazardous environments can influence their children's understanding of danger and reduce the probability of children experiencing injuries (Morrongiello, McArthur, & Bell, 2014). A myriad of child safety research has focused on the perspectives of primary caregiving mothers and fathers as secondary caregivers; in these studies, the individuals involved have been heterosexual (Brussoni, Olsen, Creighton, & Oliffe, 2013). Currently, there is a lack of research on single, stay-at-home, and gay fathers' perspectives on outdoor risky play. Single, stay-at-home, and gay fathers play vital roles in their children's development and, as such, can offer important insights into children's safety research (Doucet, 2006a, 2006b).

Researchers have compared gender differences in heterosexual mothers' and heterosexual fathers' child supervision beliefs and general perspectives on injury and children's risk taking (Morrongiello, Walpole, & McArthur, 2009; Morrongiello, Zdzieborski, & Normand, 2010). Further, researchers have also explored fathers' access to safety information and their perspectives on child injury prevention and unintentional injury (Brussoni, Creighton, Olsen, & Oliffe, 2013; Brussoni & Olsen, 2011; Brussoni et al., 2013; Creighton, Brussoni, Oliffe, & Olsen, 2014). However, there has not been research that specifically explores single, stay-at-home, and gay fathers' perspectives of their children's outdoor risky play behaviours. In this paper, I make a contribution to this area of research by addressing the question, "What are single, stay-at-home, and gay fathers' perspectives of their 4-12 year old children's outdoor risky play behaviour and how do they relate to discourses of good fathering?"

Using poststructural feminist theory (Jackson, 2001) and critical discourse analysis (Weedon, 1988), my 12 semi-structured interviews and 6 photo elicitation interviews with single,

stay-at-home, and gay fathers revealed five key discourses that relate to “good” fathering: 1) children’s play is safer now than when the participants were children; 2) fathers need to know what each child needs for the child to be safe outdoors; 3) fathers need to protect their children from danger; 4) it’s good to expose children to outdoor risky play; and 5) experiencing scrapes and bruises is a part of growing up. My results indicate that these single, stay-at-home, and gay fathers’ perspectives on their children’s outdoor risky play both reaffirm and resist dominant discourses on good fathering.

Literature Review

Now more than ever, parents are afraid to allow their children to engage in outdoor play (Tremblay et al., 2015). This is largely due to greater societal discussions on safety that surmise that it is crucial to protect children from risk and danger, and that exposure to risk and danger outdoors can lead to children being abducted, injured, or harmed (Tremblay et al., 2015). Parents play vital roles in their children’s safety and offer important insights into their children’s outdoor risky play behaviours (Tremblay et al., 2015). Studies with heterosexual fathers who work outside the home have shown that these father are more likely than mothers to encourage children to participate in physical and exploratory play and to encourage their children’s risky (Brussoni & Olsen, 2011).

Despite their exclusion from research on outdoor risky play, it is also important to consider single, stay-at-home, and gay fathers’ understanding of their children’s outdoor risky play behaviours to ensure that research reflect current changes in family dynamics and disrupts heteronormative fathering discourses. Further, it is important to discuss single, stay-at-home, and gay fathers’ understandings of good fathering discourses as they relate to their children’s outdoor risky play, as their perspectives may be different than their heterosexual counterparts who work

outside of the home and who are not necessarily primary caregivers, and may thus have a different impact.

Outdoor Risky Play and Unintentional Injuries

It is widely acknowledged that children's engagement in play activities is an important component in facilitating healthful child development (Brockman, Jago, & Fox, 2011). Health practitioners worldwide recommend children engage in outdoor active play, even if the play is considered risky, within a variety of settings, including but not limited to the home, outdoors, nature, the playground, and school (Tremblay et al., 2015). Risky play is defined "as thrilling and exciting play that can include the possibility of physical injury" (Brussoni et al., 2015, p. 6425). There are six categories of risky play for children: Play at great heights, great speed, with dangerous tools, dangerous elements, rough-and-tumble play, and play where there is a chance of getting lost or disappearing (Sandseter, 2007). The benefits associated with children's engagement in outdoor risky play include increases in motor skill development and self-esteem, improved risk detection, as well as a variety of other improvements in mental and physical development (Brussoni et al., 2015). Despite these benefits, parental concern about engagement in outdoor risky play resulting in injury and death abounds, despite the fact that, most frequently, injuries associated with engagement in outdoor risky play require little to no medical intervention (Brussoni et al., 2015).

Parents' hesitation about their children's participation in outdoor risky play has contributed to a continual decrease in the amount of outdoor risky play in which children participate (Brussoni et al., 2015). Due to societal attitudes within Western societies that emphasize parents' need to protect and their supervise children, today fewer children are exposed to environments (such as playgrounds, streets, and forests) that offer potential for outdoor risky

play than in the past (Tremblay et al., 2015). Thus, the nature of children's outdoor risky play has changed, with children spending less time playing outdoors, more time in adult-structured play, and less time in unsupervised play activities (Brussoni et al., 2015). Parents' hesitations to allow their children to participate in outdoor risky play are largely due to fears of abductions and the potential for traffic-related injuries (Brussoni et al., 2015). Further, parents may focus on the potential negative outcomes of allowing their children to engage in outdoor risky play, such as unintentional injuries, instead of perceiving their children's engagement in outdoor risky play as an activity that fosters healthful child development (Tremblay et al., 2015).

According to Hyder and colleagues (2008), unintentional injuries are the leading cause of death for children and young adults, especially in low- and middle-income countries. Globally, the five unintentional injuries that are the leading cause of death for children are drowning, falls, poisoning, road traffic crashes, and burns (Harvey, Towner, Peden, Soori, & Bartolomeos, 2009). Importantly, "Each year approximately 950 000 children aged less than 18 years die as a result of an injury or violence. Nearly 90% of these – about 830 000 – are due to unintentional injuries" (Harvey et al., 2009, p. 390). Health professionals who thus advocate for children's outdoor risky play must address parents' hesitations towards allowing their children to engage in outdoor risky play and gain insight into parents' fears of their children sustaining unintentional injuries. As parents' anticipation of risk, knowledge of safety strategies, and supervision practices influence the probability of a physical activity or sport-related injury (Ablewhite et al., 2015), understanding all parents' perspectives on outdoor risky play is important.

Fathers' Influence on their Children's Safety

Until recently, mothers have been the focus of child injury prevention research (Brussoni, et al., 2013). This is largely due to societal perceptions of mothers being primary caregivers and

the primary influence on children's safety (Doucet, 2006a, 2006b). While a wealth of child injury prevention literature has explored mothers' perspectives on outdoor risky play, an increasing amount of research over the past decade has contributed to an understanding of the importance of fathers' perspectives (Brussoni & Olsen, 2011; Brussoni & Olsen, 2013; Brussoni, et al., 2013; Creighton, Brussoni, Oliffe, & Olsen, 2015; Creighton, Brussoni, Oliffe, & Olsen, 2017; Olsen, Brussoni, Ishikawa, & Mâsse, 2012). Indeed, while mothers typically spend more time bathing, closely supervising, feeding, and dressing children (Doucet, 2006a), fathers spend more time with their children in interactive settings, including children's active play (Brussoni & Olsen, 2011). Further, children who play with their fathers engage in more physical risky play than when they play with their mothers (Brussoni & Olsen, 2011). Brussoni and Olsen (2011) conducted a study with 32 fathers of children aged 2-7 from British Columbia, Canada, to explore the level of risk to which fathers were willing to expose their children. They found that this diverse group of fathers encouraged their children to engage in new challenges and opportunities, encouraged risky play, valued their children's protection from serious injury (e.g., head trauma), and expressed a need to balance the risks children are exposed to with protection (Brussoni & Olsen, 2011).

Single, Stay-at-Home, and Gay Fathers

Research conducted on fathers' perspectives on topics relating to outdoor risky play has typically been conducted with traditional fathers (i.e., heterosexual, working away from home, and secondary caregivers) (Brussoni et al., 2015; Morrongiello et al., 2012). Within Canada, there have been increases in the number single, stay-at-home, and gay fathers throughout the past decade (Statistics Canada, 2011a, 2011b). As a result, a significant portion of the parenting demographic has remained unrepresented. Further, this means that the information that is

available to child safety advocates may not accurately represent all parents. In order to better understand fathers' perspectives on outdoor risky play, it is thus imperative to explore the perspectives of non-traditional fathers.

Single, stay-at-home, and gay fathers are not represented by the dominant masculine-fuelled discourses that promote fathers' need to work away from the home and to be a secondary caregiver and nurturer to their children (Brinamen & Mitchell, 2008; Doucet, 2006a; Lewin, 2009). Instead, these fathers take on roles that are traditionally perceived as mothering-roles, as they are often primary caregivers and are involved in the bathing, feeding, dressing, and supervision of their children (Doucet 2004, & 2006a). There is thus reason to believe that their perspectives on their children's outdoor risky play behaviours and "good fathering" are not represented by research that has addressed traditional fathers' perspectives on children's outdoor risky play.

"Good" and "Bad" Parenting Discourses

Dominant discourses of safety influence discussions on good and bad parenting practices (Squires, 2008) by emphasizing the need for parents to protect their children (Squires, 2008). Although the family unit is often considered a sacred space where parents should be allowed to parent in a style that suits them, parenting is also a social phenomenon (Squires, 2008). More specifically, parents are expected to act and discipline children in ways that attest to "good" parenting protocols (Squires, 2008); this means that parents feel pressure to behave as good parents in the public sphere, as they understand that their actions around their children will be judged by other members of society (Ginsburg, 2007; Pedersen, 2012; Squires, 2008). Further, if parents do not capitulate to what is expected of them and are judged as bad parents, they are aware that there may be negative consequences or that they may be in jeopardy of losing their

children (Squires, 2008), a pressure that could be especially acute for non-traditional fathers. Non-traditional fathers, such as single, stay-at-home, and gay fathers, are often perceived as bad fathers due to the fact that they challenge the heteronormative discourses on parenting (Doucet, 2006b). They do not fit the fathering stereotype of being emotionally distant and removed from their children and instead take on roles that engage them with their children's emotional and physical needs (Doucet, 2006a; Messner, 1997).

Indeed, single, stay-at-home, and gay fathers reside in a world that has discursively produced them as unfit to parent (Doucet, 2006a). Not only are they men who have taken on the primary or co-parenting role, which is typically perceived as the mother's role, but they also disrupt many discourses of what good fathers provide for children (Doucet, 2006a). In particular, gay fathers are often perceived as a threat to the sacredness of fatherhood as overtly masculine (Giesler, 2012). Traditionally, good fathers are portrayed as a counter to the feminine attributes of mothers, such as being caring and nurturing. Instead, good fathers are portrayed as stoic, brave, and as promoting children's independence and physical growth (Messner, 1997). According to dominant parenting and masculine discourses, the balance of having a feminine mother and a masculine father is perceived as being crucial for children's development (Doucet, 2006b; Giesler, 2012; Pedersen, 2012). Thus, to those who subscribe to dominant fathering discourses, beliefs about single, stay-at-home, and gay fathers as overtly feminine paints a disparaging picture of single, stay-at-home, and gay fathers potential positive influences on their children's lives. Indeed, dominant discourses on good fathers contribute to portray fathers as men who prioritize their children's risky play over safety (Brussoni et al., 2015; Giesler, 2012). Further, as single, stay-at-home, and gay fathers can take on the role of primary caregiver for

their children, they do not always fill the discursively produced good fathering role of being a financial provider (Pedersen, 2012).

Due to dominant discourses in society that place mothers at the forefront of safety (Brussoni & Olsen, 2011; Pedersen, 2012), fathers are often construed as the thrill-seekers, while mothers are considered the worriers (Pedersen, 2012). In dominant parenting discourses, concern, worry, and preoccupation with safety are considered to be attributes of good parents (i.e., mothers) (Coakley, 2005). Dominant discourses on motherhood portray the good mother as putting the needs of the child before her own needs, prioritizing the child's safety, and being emotionally involved in the child's care and nurture (Pedersen, 2012). These discourses contrast with those of the good father: one who is actively engaged with his children, is a financial provider, and who cares for his children (Pedersen, 2012), albeit in an emotionally distant way. According to Pedersen (2012), even good fathers are still perceived as being less capable of caring for children when compared to mothers. It is thus no surprise that fathers, who are associated in parenting discourses with masculinity, aggression, and physicality (Messner, 1997), are believed to be less fit than mothers to provide safety for their children during play (Doucet, 2006a). Thus, single, stay-at-home, and gay fathers may feel an even stronger need than their traditional counterparts to be perceived as good fathers and to combat discourses that produce them as being deficient in good fathering characteristics/abilities. As a result, through this research, I sought to understand single, stay-at-home, and gay fathers' perspectives of their children's outdoor risky play behaviours and how they relate to discourses of good fathering.

Theoretical Framework

In this study, I employed poststructural feminist theory because of its ability to examine the ways in which language, power relations, and discourse (Weedon, 1988) influence single,

stay-at-home, and gay fathers' understandings of their children's outdoor risky play and good parenting. Language, according to poststructural feminist thought, is used to construct meaning (Weedon, 1988). Exploring how people use language illuminates important socio-historical influences on people's uptake of information and how knowledge is created (Weedon, 1988). Further, the exploration of the utilization of language can provide insights into the social contexts in which an individual is situated (Weedon, 1988). Understanding the utilization of language can further provide insight into existing power relations.

Poststructural feminist theorists examine power relations and how they can be used to resist and reaffirm dominant discourses (Weedon, 1988). Importantly, poststructural feminist theorists posit that people do not have power; rather, power is something people exercise. Power relations are heavily tied to societal discourses that are continually (re)produced and (re)shaped by social beings (Weedon, 1988). Discourses refer to the dialogues, discussions, and ideologies that (re)produce forms of knowledge (Weedon, 1988). Discourses are thus constructed through multiple acting agents (e.g., the media) who perpetuate certain relations of power. Dominant discourses (e.g., that fathers are secondary providers of care to children) subjugate perspectives that may challenge or resist what is considered to be normal (Weedon, 1988).

Methodology

Feminist methodology was an appropriate choice for my research because it can be used to address gendered discourses and because it views gender as socially constructed (Taylor, 1998). Its use in social justice research can help to correct past imbalances in research that have privileged one gender over another (Taylor, 1998). As single, stay-at-home, and gay fathers' perspectives are currently subjugated in research on outdoor risky play, and as feminist methodology is now well-established as a robust methodology to represent men's perspectives in

research (Gardiner, 2004; Silverstein, 1996), it is an excellent means by which to explore single, stay-at-home, and gay fathers' perspectives on their children's outdoor risky play.

Methods

Participant Recruitment and Procedure

I conducted this research in three cities in Canada: Ottawa, Montreal, and Toronto. Prior to commencing recruitment, the research received approval from the Research Ethics Board at the University of Ottawa (see Appendix 1). Inclusion criteria for this study were that participants were single, stay-at-home, or gay fathers, proficient in the English language, considered themselves to be primary caregivers or have joint-custody of their children, and had at least one child aged 4-12. I selected this age range because children between 4-6 of age can engage with preschool-based play that provides unstructured free play outdoors and promotes physical activity (Cardon, Van Cauwenberghe, Labarque, Haerens, & De Bourdeaudhuij, 2008), while those in the 6-12 age range children learn safety strategies, how to approach risky and dangerous situations and avoid injuries, and fair and safe play (Van Mechelen & Verhagen, 2005). The 4-12 age range is thus a critical period in a child's development when s/he first learns important safety strategies for engaging in outdoor risky play.

In order to recruit participants, I spent time in Ottawa and Montreal posting flyers in local single, stay-at-home, and gay father community organizations and centers. I also posted flyers in local gay bars after asking for permission from the owners. Further, I sent recruitment posters over e-mail to various related community organizations in Ottawa, Montreal, and Toronto. In Montreal and Ottawa, I attended different community events in person and spoke with any fathers who were interested in my research if they approached me with questions. I also recruited one father through a Facebook message, as he is a public online figure who blogs about being a

stay-at-home father and is active in the stay-at-home fathering community. If fathers were interested in participating and met the recruitment criteria, I spoke with them in person or sent them information about the study over e-mail. Some fathers indicated that they knew other fathers who may be interested in participating, and so they asked their friends to contact me if they would like to participate. Thus, I used snowball sampling (Cohen & Arieli, 2010) and further contacted the friends of the fathers who indicated interest in participating in this research. I met with interested fathers at locations of their choosing that were local and public. The only exception were two fathers who I knew personally, whom I spoke with at their houses. For the 3 fathers (2 stay-at-home, 1 gay) who indicated interest in participating over the phone, the interviews were conducted over the phone. A total of 12 fathers were interviewed: 6 single (3 primary custody, 3 joint custody), 4 stay-at-home, and 2 gay fathers. All participants except one are white, with the exception of one stay-at-home father (Mark) is Asian-Canadian.

Table 1

Participant Information and Number of Interviews

Pseudo-Name	Semi-Structured Interview	Photo-Elicitation Interview	Single, Stay-at-Home, or Gay	Age of Children (S = Son, D = Daughter)
Jake	YES	YES	Single	D: 11, D: 13, D: 15
Peter	YES	NO	Single	S: 3, S: 6
John	YES	YES	Single	D: 2, D: 4

Brent	YES	NO	Single	D: 11, S: 20, S: 40, S: 45, D: 30, D: 30
Adam	YES	YES	Single	S: 4, S: 6
Ben	YES	NO	Single	S: 6, S: 9
Michel	YES	NO	Stay-at-Home	S: 2, S: 4
Brad	YES	NO	Stay-at-Home	D: 8, D: 11
Mark (AC)	YES	YES	Stay-at-Home	S: 7, S: 9
Kyle	YES	YES	Stay-at-Home	D: 5, S: 9, S: 11
West	YES	NO	Gay	S: 8, S: 10
Luke	YES	YES	Gay	S: 5, D: 5

To examine single, stay-at-home, and gay fathers' perspectives on their children's outdoor risky play behaviours, I used two exploratory qualitative research methods: semi-structured interviews (Gill, Stewart, Treasure, & Chadwick, 2008) and photo-elicitation interviews (Richard & Lahman, 2015). Semi-structured interviews provide an excellent means to explore questions relating to specific topics of interest (Drever, 1995). Semi-structured interviews allow participants to freely speak about issues relating to the topic of interest that are meaningful to them and extend beyond the researcher's pre-established questions (Drever, 1995). Further, photo-elicitation interviews empower participants by having the participants play an active role in capturing meaningful moments and experiences (Richard & Lahman, 2015). Photo-elicitation consists of participants taking photographs of topic related or relevant experiences and moments (Richard & Lahman, 2015). The participants then bring the photographs, either

digitally or physically, to the interview, during which they can discuss the photographs and their relevancy to the topic with the researcher (Richard & Lahman, 2015). During the photo-elicitation interview, participants may recall their experiences by having tangible examples of meaningful perspectives (Richard & Lahman, 2015). After obtaining informed consent, I digitally recorded all interviews. All of the participants that participated in the photo-elicitation interviews permitted me to use the photographs, after personal identifiers were blurred, for academic or scholarly purposes. The photographs contributed to the data by presenting participants with unique opportunities during the photo-elicitation interview to recall important details that influenced their perspectives on their children's outdoor risky play. During the photo-elicitation interview, I also asked participants why they believed the photographs depicted safe, risky, or dangerous play. I provided participants with verbatim transcripts and the opportunity to omit data or to provide clarification. Only one participant provided clarification on one statement; the remainder did not provide any edits.

Analysis

In this paper, I used critical discourse analysis (CDA), supported by NVivo10™ software, to explore single, stay-at-home, and gay fathers' understandings of their children's outdoor risky play. My use of CDA allowed me to analyze the language, power relations, and discourses discussed by participants. CDA was the best choice of analysis for my research, as it illuminates social differences in power relations and sites of struggle (Fairclough, Mulderrig, & Wodak, 2011). Further, CDA is an excellent means to explore social, political, and cultural changes in society, as it can be used to represent subjugated, minority, and oppressed populations and their perspectives (Fairclough et al., 2011). According to Mogashoa (2014), CDA has numerous strengths, some of which include illuminating social issues through text or spoken

word, bringing unacknowledged resistance and struggle to the forefront of discussion, and representing and promoting the voices of dominated groups of people. It is thus an ideal analytic tool to understand single, stay-at-home, and gay fathers' perspectives on their children's outdoor risky play.

I followed Willig's (2003) six-stage approach to CDA: 1) I transcribed and re-read text (i.e., photos and transcripts) in order to familiarize myself with their material and identify the ways by which discourses on fatherhood and outdoor risky play were constructed; 2) I identified how children and participants were constructed throughout the text and examined the differences and similarities between these constructions; 3) I identified how the discourses related to one another; 4) I examined the position of each participant relative to each discourse; 5) I examined opportunities for action (e.g., exploring how perspectives contributed to understandings of safety marketing and communications); 6) I explored all discursive positions relative to each participant's experiences and understandings of good and bad parenting, fatherhood, and outdoor risky play.

Results

My analysis revealed the following discourses: children's play is safer now than when the participants were children; fathers need to know what each child needs for the child to be safe outdoors; fathers need to protect their children from danger; it's good to expose children to outdoor risky play; experiencing scrapes and bruises is a part of growing up.

Children's Play is Safer Now than When the Participants Were Children

During the interviews, I asked the fathers about differences in children's play now compared to when they were children. All of the fathers except one said that they saw differences in how their children play outside compared to how they played outside when they

were their children's age. Mark said: "I think it's just different now. I think in general that, like, our generation of parents are much more programmed to hover. Probably different from when we were younger. Even on the playground."

Further, the fathers often described situations when they were younger when they would play outside for most of the day without supervision. In line with this, John said, "When I grew up, we just played outside all the time...Mom kicked us out and said, 'go play, just be home for supper.' So, we drove around the neighborhoods on our bikes and stuff like that." The fathers discussed how they had more access to risky and dangerous play because they experienced a type of freedom to explore their environment that is not offered to their children. Brent described his childhood as almost always involving unsupervised, independent, and risky and dangerous play. He spoke about how he and his brothers broke many bones because of activities he considers "pretty physically risky," such as climbing very tall trees, walking along cliffs, and white water kayaking. When asked if he would let his children do the same activities, he replied laughing, "I would never let either of them do half of our activities." When talking about his son fishing on the side of cliffs, Brent said, "He terrifies me. I mean I used to be worse than him, but I'm terrified for him." West responded that, as a child, he would spend all day outdoors, but that his kids are the opposite - that his daughter stays indoors for most of the winter season.

The fathers spoke about how these differences in children's engagement in outdoor risky play from when they were children themselves are due to parents having more access to safety information. The fathers explained that due to increasing access to information on helmets, road and playground safety, concussions, and predators, they limit and supervise their children's engagement with outdoor risky play because they believe it keeps their children safe. When asked why he would not allow his children to play the way he did when he was a child, Jake said,

“The media. We know more than our parents did.” Similarly, when asked why he tells his daughter to wear a helmet when she rides her bike even when he himself does not wear a helmet, Jake said, “Society tells me I should.” Similarly, Luke also spoke about how his children are required to wear safety gear. He further documented his son wearing safety gear while riding a bike (see Figure 1).

Figure 1.



Ben, whose eldest son died due to an unforeseen sudden illness, noted that this increased access to information is not always good because, “we’re being taught to fear everything, which is ridiculous...Because I recognize that in our society...there’s this idea that you have to fear.” Ben said that because he lost his oldest son, he does not want his youngest son to feel overprotected, but that it is hard not to worry about things that the media showcases. He said,

“Now maybe there aren’t more child molesters nowadays than when we were growing up, just we hear about it...it’s promoted and I think it’s over promoted. So, I try to recognize it.”

Fathers Need to Know Each Child’s Needs for the Child to be Safe during Outdoor Play

In order to protect their children, the fathers expressed that it is necessary to protect each of their children differently, and that the kind of protection is based on the children’s ages, personalities, and development. Thus, the fathers explained that each child needs different levels of attention and supervision, and that fathers need to know what each individual child requires for the child to be safe in an outdoor environment. West, when speaking about his child who is on the Autism spectrum and diagnosed with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), said:

He’s definitely afraid of trying things and I don’t possibly encourage him the way I do with his older brother, just because I’m worried about him and his safety. His older brother is the opposite of [him]. Adventurous, daredevil, you turn your back and he’s climbing the door frame...So what we do for one is not equal or the same for the other.

When talking about the personality differences between his children on the playground, Luke said that his son requires more supervision than his older daughter:

I think he was getting a bit frustrated that his sister, who I would say has better motor skills than he does, she was able to climb this thing quite nicely...[so he] started to go recklessly up...[and] he kind of got stuck and ended up crying, and I had to go over and help him.

In line with this, John said that he worries more about his youngest daughter than his oldest, and that this worry is not due to the child’s age, but rather her personality. He said, “Oh yeah, I’m way more worried about Sarah than Emily. Because Sarah doesn’t think. She just does...It’s a

personality trait...[her sister] assessed the situation more when she was her age.” Brent, who has a son with dyspraxia, a developmental coordination disorder, said that he encourages his son to pursue risky outdoor play because he wants his son to develop physical skills. When talking about the physical differences between his children, he said that for his daughter, “everything was easier for her. And she didn’t have problems.” He thus encourages his son to engage in more risky play than his daughter.

Fathers Need to Protect Their Children from Danger

Overall, the fathers unanimously said that they needed to keep their children alive, happy, and healthy, and that it was their job to educate their children about danger. The fathers said that they would not encourage dangerous play (with the definition of extreme differing for each father, but generally relating to a high probability of serious/permanent injury) and instead would restrict or prohibit any activities that they perceived as dangerous. Brad noted, “I would never put [my kids] in a place where there could be danger.” The fathers explained that although there are certain instances when dangerous play is acceptable (i.e., if they trust that their children will not be permanently injured), they will still protect their children by either supervising, educating, or assisting them.

The fathers identified many different contexts for dangerous play that were particular to their life situation (i.e. where they live, what their family has access to, and how their children behave). Two fathers of young children (4-6) identified a need to protect children from falling branches, all fathers of young children identified a need to protect children from cars and traffic, and five fathers identified a need to protect children from sexual predators.

Brad said that the ice storms in Canada can lead to dangerous environments, such as tree branches with thick sheets of ice. He said, “it’s a constant reminder that there’s a risk when you

go out there.” Brad discussed that it is important for him to visually inspect the risk for injury associated with going outside when the branches are falling from trees in his backyard. If the risk is too high and he considers the backyard dangerous, he will not allow his children to play outside. In line with this, Brent also discussed the importance of protecting his daughter from harm associated with tree branches. His daughter uses a swing in his backyard that is attached to an old, rotting branch that he described as being very high. Thus, to protect his daughter, before she swings, he tests the weight that the swing can carry by putting himself on the swing and jumping up and down. He said:

If it’s not going to break for me, it’s certainly not going to break for her, because she divides her weight among two ropes whereas I don’t and I’m two and a half times [her weight] and I jump up and down on both sides...but sooner or later that tree’s going to come down.

While danger was often associated with children engaging in outdoor play that was beyond children’s comfort or ability level, all of the fathers of young children (4 to 6) expressed worry and concern surrounding dangerous play involving the road. This was because they believe that younger children do not have the awareness to understand road safety and thus are in jeopardy of being hit by cars. John noted:

Just like playing in the street. I think that’s dangerous. Not risky, dangerous. Because they’re four years old and they’re going to be walking in circles and playing with stones and she’s going to be climbing on her belly for some reason to look at a bug and a car could just...you know, they’re not constantly alert. They don’t know how dangerous cars are.

In order to provide protection for his four-year-old daughter, John said that he supervises her and makes sure that she is not near road traffic. Peter, a father with two young sons, said that he educates his sons about potential road dangers and protects them through demonstrations. When he discussed how he demonstrates this when his son is throwing a ball, he said:

What I do is, [Dan] catches on the side of the construction, I catch on the side of the parking lot. That way if the ball passes me or he throws a pass to me,... I can go get it...as a father I'd probably have to...make sure that he's responsible. So if I get a chance at the beginning of spring or summer, I'll say, "okay Dan, I'm going to throw it to you on the side where the parking lot is. Remember, you have to get the ball. I want you to look both ways, so show me you can do it. "

Similarly Luke explained that,

part of protection is just educating them. Explaining that if you get hit by a car there's a good chance you'll die...or get hurt really bad...also, putting it in perspective how their actual capacity to experience those or that actually happening...So there's that type of protection, but then there's also protection from, like, sexual predators.

When describing the attention that sexual predators get on the news, Jake said, "and talking about that sexist part? I have three daughters. It's that fear that bad things can happen to boys...[but] in my mind, worse things could happen to girls." In order to protect his children, Luke explained that he and his partner tell their children what to do if they encounter a sexual predator: "if someone touches you, you tell us or another adult."

Indeed, the fathers voiced that protecting their children from danger was part of their job. Adam said that when his children play around bodies of water such as lakes it can be dangerous because his children could fall in and drown. He thus protects them from the danger of falling in

by supervising them and not allowing them to get close enough to the water to fall in (see Figure 4).

Figure 4.



Michel, a father to two very young children (2.5 and 4 years old) said that it is important to him to feel as if he is communicating with his children. When he discussed outdoor activities with his daughter, he said, “I often tell her that it’s my job to keep her safe.” When asked how he does this, Michel echoed the beliefs of the fathers on this topic:

either through verbal explanation or through safely allowing them to make those discoveries on their own...this is an active role of being their protector or guardian, and part of it is passing on knowledge about what’s safe and what isn’t.

It’s Good to Expose Children to Outdoor Risky Play

The fathers unanimously reported that it was important to expose children to risky play. John said, “I think it’s very important because it shows independence and they shouldn’t fear

anything, because if you are guarded and your parents guard you, you're going to feel guarded your whole life." When asked why he believed it was good for children to take risks, Mark argued:

[Children] can become more confident...take risks for themselves when they get older, and it's healthy...If you don't take any risks, they have a more boring life...I think it'll spill over into other things, like having them speak up for themselves more or be confident.

Mark responded to the question of why he pushes his children to engage in outdoor risky play by saying:

If I think it's something that's still within their ability...and I think they might learn something or become more confident, then I might push them, but I'm not one to push them to do something if they don't like want to.

When asked if he believed taking risks was associated with developing skills, Brent replied, "Yeah and being self-confident and not being scared of things." Adam said that while he does not encourage dangerous play, he encourages his children to participate in risky play. When asked why, he said:

Because I think it's the way that [my son] will understand that something is risky. So if I'm too much on him, he will never know where is the limit and he will always want to reach it, so when I will not be with him he will take the risk and [it] will be more dangerous...I think it's a good opportunity for them to learn everything and later they will not be scared to do anything so they will have fun with the other people.

In line with this, Brent said that before he had adopted his son, his son was exposed to various atrocities in his home country. When his son arrived in Canada, he was malnourished,

lonely, and afraid. In order to help boost his self-esteem, he bought his son a dirt bike (which he considered to enable outdoor risky play) in the hopes that it would help his son become more confident. When speaking about the effect that that had on his son, he said:

He went from the world's biggest wimp to the guy with a lot of self-confidence because he had this bike all of the other kids admired because no kid had a bike like that. And he was good on it! And he could beat me..., which made him feel quite proud of himself...and he was happy.

The benefits of engaging in outdoor risky play were thus perceived as children learning how to navigate unpredictable environments, gaining self-confidence and self-esteem, experiencing physical growth, becoming more self-reliant and independent, and enjoying the outdoors.

Experiencing Scrapes and Bruises is a Part of Growing Up

The fathers unanimously said that experiencing scrapes and bruises is simply a part of growing up. Further, they did not consider scrapes and bruises to be injuries. In fact, when the question was asked as to whether or not their children have experienced any injuries playing outdoors, most of the fathers answered with what they considered a serious injury (broken bones, large or deep cuts, concussions, or permanent damage) without mentioning scrapes or bruises. When later asked if their children experienced scrapes or bruises playing outdoors, the fathers all said yes, but unless the bruises were on their children's heads or there was an abundance of them at once, they were not of concern. When asked if his children ever experience injuries like scrapes and bruises, Brad replied, "No, those are great. My girls can look like that and we either figure how quickly they can suck it up, or what's a boo-boo and what's an injury. There's a big difference. I find scrapes and bumps are learning experiences." When he spoke about why experiencing scrapes and bruises is a good learning experience for children, Brad elaborated:

It helps you move on. It helps you not wallow in the situation and instead rectify it. Do you want to sit here rubbing your boo-boo or do you want to find a way to fix it, to communicate with the people that can help me.

In response to the question of why he did not consider scrapes and bruises disconcerting, Mark responded:

If you've never had a scrape or bruise then I don't think you're getting physical activity. I think the biggest thing is that they're getting physical activity, being healthy...If they're not getting scrapes or bruises, they're not being a kid...I don't encourage them getting hurt, but I encourage them playing and playing hard. Sometimes you're going to step and you're going to get a scrape. If you ride your bike, you're going to wipe out, that's going to happen.

Similar to Mark, Michel, a father of two very young children, replied:

That's part of living. That's part of being a kid and exploring and doing things. Do I show compassion and empathy when it happens? Absolutely. And we bandage it and we talk about what happened. Does it concern you, yes, it tugs at your heart strings, absolutely, but that's just kind of... I think that's just part of what's going to happen.

In fact, several fathers said that their families had different ways to describe scrapes and bruises, which included alternative names such as "summer knees," "blue knees", and as previously mentioned, "boo-boos." Even West, a father who described himself as overprotective, responded to the question of what his perspectives were on scrapes and bruises by saying, "[scrapes and bruises are a] part of childhood. You know, I would prefer [my children] to be outside and enjoying the fresh air and getting a little scrape than sitting in the house." Kyle echoed these beliefs and stated that he allows his children to engage in play in the woods even

though he knows his children will experience scrapes and bruises. He said that he encourages his children to play with sticks (see Figure 5) even if they use the sticks to play-fight, because he believes it will help them develop their creativity and help them enjoy the outdoors.

Figure 5.



Overall, fathers had a unanimously positive attitude towards their children experiencing scrapes and bruises. They believed that their children would learn how to overcome harm, hurt, and small injuries, develop resilience, and their children would engage in a larger variety of play activities after realizing that they can be hurt and overcome the pain. While the fathers explained that they did not like to see their children in pain, they agreed that experiencing scrapes and bruises is beneficial for children's development.

Discussion

In order to better understand non-traditional fathers' perspectives on outdoor risky play in child safety and injury prevention research, I explored 12 single, stay-at-home, and gay fathers'

perspectives of their children's outdoor risky play behaviours and how they are related to discourses on good parenting. Interviews with these participants revealed five discourses: Children's play is safer now than when the participants were children; fathers need to know what each child needs for the child to be safe outdoors; fathers need to protect their children from danger; it's good to expose children to outdoor risky play; experiencing scrapes and bruises is a part of growing up. In this discussion I illustrate how these discourses provide important insight into 12 non-traditional fathers' beliefs concerning children's outdoor risky play and how they relate to discourses of good and bad parenting. In particular, I identified within each of the five discourses a significant tension between the competing discourses that good fathers facilitate risky play versus the discourse that good fathers need to protect their children. These results extend past research on fathers' roles in child injury prevention that has examined "typical" fathers' perspectives on children's outdoor risky play (Brussoni et al., 2013; Brussoni, Olsen, Pike, & Sleet, 2012; Doucet, 2006a; Morrongiello et al., 2009).

Children's Play is Safer Now than When the Participants Were Children

Pressures to be a good father applied to the fathers in this study in the context of their children's engagement in outdoor risky play. The fathers argued that children's play is safer now than when they themselves were children. Whereas in the past children spent more time in unsupervised and risky outdoor play (Brussoni et al., 2012), increases in access to safety information through the media (Smith, 2014), as well as greater societal appreciation for child safety (Smith, 2014), have contributed to fathers feeling an even more pronounced need to keep their children safe (Pedersen, 2012). The fathers in this study felt pressure to comply with good parenting discourses that encourage accessing child safety information and enforcing child safety protocols. For the fathers, keeping their children away from injury and risk and accessing child

safety information related to perceptions of “good” fathering, whereas encouraging play habits similar to how participants played when they were younger were not perceived as favourably. Indeed, the fathers reported feeling as though they live in a social climate that prioritizes child safety and discourages fathers from having their children play in ways that could lead to injury and harm. The fact that the fathers in this study identified that children’s play is safer now than when the participants themselves were children – as well as their role in facilitating their children’s safety - indicates a resistance to dominant discourses of fathers as the risk encouraging parent (Pedersen, 2012). By accessing child safety information and enforcing child safety practices when their children engage in outdoor risky play, the fathers are reinforcing good fathering discourses that stress the need to protect one’s children (Lamb, 2010), while rejecting the competing discourse of fathers being the risky parent.

Fathers Need to Know What Each Child Needs for the Child to be Safe Outdoors

The fathers stated that fathers need to know what each child needs for the child to be safe outdoors. They discussed that in order to keep their children safe and provide protection during their children’s engagement with outdoor risky play, they needed to be in tune with their children’s age, personality, and development. This discourse challenges dominant discourses on parenting that posit that it is mothers and not fathers who have keen and intimate understandings of their children and their development and that fathers are essentially reckless risk-takers (Doucet, 2006a, 2006b). Conversely, these findings reinforce dominant discourses on parenting that posit that fathers play the role of protector in their children’s lives. The fathers thus exercised power through their resistance to dominant, masculine productions of the good father role that portrays fathers as unconcerned with children’s safety in day-to-day activities (Messner, 1997; Pedersen, 2012). Single, stay-at-home, and gay fathers have daily roles that actively

challenge dominant discourses on fathers as less involved with their children's care (Doucet, 2004, 2006a, 2006b). It is thus not surprising to find that the single, stay-at-home, and gay fathers in this study wanted to have an intimate understanding of their children's outdoor risky play experiences in order to keep their children safe outdoors.

Fathers Need to Protect their Children from Danger

There is an existing tension in dominant discourses of masculinity and fatherhood where fathers are expected to be both protectors and risk-takers (Brussoni et al., 2013; Pedesner, 2012; Messner, 1997). The single, stay-at-home, and gay fathers who participated in the study currently reside -and arguably have always resided - in a socio-historical climate that emphasizes the need for fathers to protect children from danger (Lamb, 2010). The fathers who participated in the study thus echoed the concern to protect their children from danger by acknowledging the need to protect their children from *danger* during outdoor risky play. In particular, the fathers worried about their children's engagement with dangerous circumstances outdoors, and they believed it was their role as good fathers to protect their children from experiencing major injury. They thus took an active role in the prevention of their children's major injury experiences.

Currently, dominant discourses on good parenting promote fathers as protectors (Lamb, 2010). If fathers do not protect their children from danger, they may be faced with harsh judgements and criticisms for putting their children in harm's way (Lamb, 2010). By protecting their children from danger, the fathers are reaffirming their role as good fathers, as well as their position to comply with dominant discourses on masculinity that emphasize the father's role as protector for his family (Lamb, 2010; Messner, 1997). Despite the discursive production of single, stay-at-home, and gay fathers as being effeminate and thus unable to serve their

masculine role as protector, the single, stay-at-home, and gay fathers in the present study reinforced the discourse of father as protector.

It's Good to Expose Children to Outdoor Risky Play & Experiencing Scrapes and Bruises is a Part of Growing Up

As the fourth and fifth discourses showed, the fathers in the study held positive beliefs about outdoor risky play and experiencing scrapes and bruises, whereby they stated that their children's engagement in outdoor risky play can help their children foster resilience, overcome small injuries, promote independence, and allow their children to enjoy the outdoors. The language the fathers used to describe risky play differed greatly from the language used to describe dangerous play – the former being associated with minor injury, such as “summer knees,” and the latter being associated with major injury such as concussions.

Embedded in dominant discourses on good parenting is the notion that fathers are not expected to be as worried about their children's safety as much children's mothers (Pedersen, 2012). Yet, the fathers were clearly very concerned about their children's potential to incur injury through participation in dangerous activities. On the other hand, the fathers promoted outdoor risky play, along with its associated challenges and potential for experiencing injury, which perpetuates ideals of good fathering. Good fathers are expected to be actively concerned about their children's development and want to encourage their children to develop physical and mental skills (Pedersen, 2012).

Good Fathering for Single, Stay-at-home, and Gay Fathers

Taken together, these findings show the complex negotiations that single, stay-at-home, and gay fathers face in trying to be deemed “good fathers” while exposing their children to outdoor risky play. They fear societal judgement if they expose their children to danger, yet they

are also judged as effeminate coddlers of their children – bad fathers - if they fail to provide their children with outdoor risky play experiences, which have significant benefits. The single, stay-at-home, and gay fathers in this study navigated dominant ideals of being a protector while simultaneously being a risk-taker by taking on the role of protector for their children *during* their children's engagement in outdoor risky play, while simultaneously limiting their children's exposure to dangerous play.

Limitations

Although this research provides much needed insight into single, stay-at-home, and gay fathers' perspectives of their children's outdoor risky play behaviour, this study had several important limitations. I was unable to recruit equal numbers of single, stay-at-home, and gay fathers for the study. As a result, I was not able to identify potential differences between these groups. My difficulty in recruitment could have been due to my position as a heterosexual female with no children. Due to my limited funds, I was unable to hire a research assistant who was a single, stay-at-home, or gay father; a person of this description may have had a stronger social network from which to recruit participants and/or potential participants might have felt more comfortable completing interviews with such an individual.

Conclusion

This study makes a novel and timely contribution to addressing a gap in knowledge that exists between the fields of child injury prevention and family dynamics. It is the first to include single, stay-at-home, and gay fathers' perspectives on their children's outdoor risky play behaviour in discussions of good parenting.

Future studies should further explore single, stay-at-home, and gay fathers' perspectives on children's outdoor risky play to gain insight into the evidently important influence these

fathers have on their children's outdoor risky play behaviours. Further, future researcher should explore single, stay-at-home, and gay fathers' perspectives separately to understand if there are important similarities and differences between these populations.

Although the results of this study are not generalizable, it is important to consider the perspectives that the fathers offered as important contributions to child safety research. These perspectives are derived from their personal experiences as minority fathers and the relationships that they have with their children. Further, these perspectives are evidence of the importance of studying family dynamics in the child injury prevention context. Future studies should continue to explore non-traditional parenting perspectives to better represent the diversity of the current Canadian population.

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Chapter 3:

Do single, stay-at-home, and gay fathers' perspectives of masculinity influence their understandings of their 4-12 year old children's outdoor risky play behaviour?

Fathers play an important role in their children's development through play (Doucet, 2006b). While past research has focused on heterosexual and secondary caregiving fathers' perspectives on play (Brussoni & Olsen, 2011; Brussoni & Olsen, 2013), single, stay-at-home, and gay fathers offer important insights into how non-traditional parenting roles can influence perspectives on masculinity and play (Doucet, 2006a, 2006b). What was once considered typical of fathers, such as being emotionally disconnected from their children, is faltering, and there has been a recent redefinition of fatherhood to encompass the caring activities and behaviours typically associated with mothers (Dowd, 2000). With an increasing amount of research showcasing fathers' importance in their children's physical activity, safety, play, and injury prevention (Brussoni & Olsen, 2011; Brussoni & Olsen, 2013; Doucet, 2006a; Olsen, Oliffe, Brussoni, & Creighton, 2015), it is crucial to understand how changing understandings of fatherhood and masculinity impact fathers roles in these areas. Past research has shown that fathers spend more time than mothers engaging in physical activity and active play with their children (Featherstone, 2009; Sinno & Killen, 2009) and that fathers are more likely than mothers to allow children to take risks outdoors (Doucet, 2004ba). Further, past research has revealed that how fathers' perceive, engage with, and embody their own masculinity contributes to their own values and beliefs surrounding their children's safety (Brussoni & Olsen, 2011; Brussoni & Olsen, 2013; Doucet, 2006; Morrongiello, Zdzieborski, & Normand, 2010). This study examines single, stay-at-home, and gay fathers' perspectives of their 4-12 year old children's outdoor risky play by asking an important question: "Do single, stay-at-home, and gay fathers' perspectives of masculinity influence their understandings of their 4-12 year old children's outdoor risky play behaviour?" In order to discuss the relevance of the results of this study, it is first important to consider fathers' roles in their children's play, the need to include

single, stay-at-home, and gay fathers' in research, and how masculinity discourses are currently being challenged.

Literature Review

In the past, fathers would spend more time with sons than daughters in sport and leisure; however, more recently, fathers' supervision and participation in activity for both sexes is closer to being balanced (Lundberg & Rose, 2002). This is especially important following the acknowledgement in research that fathers typically spend more time than mothers being involved with recreational, play, and leisure activity with their children (Featherstone, 2009; Sinno & Killen, 2009). According to Doucet (2006a):

The international literature on fatherhood has repeatedly emphasized that within and across cultures, fathers' caregiving with infants and young children is overwhelmingly characterized by play, a rough and tumble approach, and a high level of activity. (p. 700)

Fathers have profound engagement in their children's family-oriented leisure and also in child-oriented activities (Marsiglio, Roy, & Fox, 2005). This engagement is fuelled not by duty, but also by a father's values and beliefs, as well as cultural and societal expectations that generate a type of self-identity that includes nurturing and protecting their children during play (Marsiglio, Roy, & Fox, 2005).

Fathers Influence on their Children's Safety

Fathers play an important role in introducing their children to risk-related settings (Brussoni, Creighton, Olsen, & Oliffe, 2013; StGeorge, Fletcher, Freeman, Paquette, & Dumon, 2015). StGeorge et al. (2015) described fathers' ability to "open their child to the world" (p. 1412) by promoting healthy physical and rough-and-tumble play that helps children gain knowledge by experiencing the environment. When fathers are both sensitive and challenging

during roughhousing, this helps children to develop perseverance, and to learn how to regulate their emotions during play (StGeorge et al., 2015). Fathers' interactions with their children during play helps to develop better relationships with their parents as well as their peers (StGeorge et al., 2015). Further, StGeorge and colleagues (2015) found that fathers' engagement in play with their children can result in fewer injuries for their children. StGeorge and colleagues (2015) stated, "By encouraging their child to extend themselves – take on new challenges, be independent, develop strength or complete difficult tasks – fathers stimulate risk taking as well as provide emotional and instrumental support" (p. 1412). According to Fujiwara, Okuyama, and Takahashi (2010), infants who have highly involved fathers can experience fewer injuries than those with less involved fathers. This is because fathers can take their children out of the home setting for outdoor activities, such as a walk together, and the supervision may mitigate potential injury experiences. Further, according to Schwebel and Brezaussek (2010), fathers who perceive themselves as having very positive relationships with their middle-aged and school-aged children believe that their children experience less injury than fathers who do not perceive their relationship as highly positive. Thus, there is evidence that fathers' involvement and care of their children influences children's experience of injury and social and physical development. Research has showcased fathers' abilities to care and provide for their children (Cabrera, Tamis-LeMonda, Bradley, Hofferth, & Lamb, 2000; White, 1994). Importantly, as stated by Cabrera, Tamis-LeMonda, Bradley, Hofferth, and Lamb (2000):

Fathers' emotional investment in, attachment to, and provision of resources for their children are all associated with the well-being, cognitive development, and social competence of young children even after the effects of such potentially significant

confounds as family income, neonatal health, maternal involvement, and paternal age are taken into account. (p. 130)

The Need to Include Single, Stay-at-Home, and Gay Fathers in Research

While past research has primarily focused on the perspectives of heterosexual and secondary caregiving fathers (Brussoni et al., 2013; Fletcher, StGeorge, & Freeman, 2012), single, stay-at-home, and gay fathers can offer important insights into fatherhood and their influences on their children's development (Doucet, 2004b). Now more than ever, "the seemingly impermeable boundaries of the traditional family have become permeable" (Emmers-Sommer, Rhea, Triplett, & O'Neil, 2003, p. 100). Indeed, Emmers-Sommer and colleagues (2003) have pointed out that the traditional family (i.e., primary caregiving mothers at home and secondary caregiving, working fathers) has changed to include more diverse representations of the family context.

In the 21st century in North America, single, stay-at-home, and gay fathers make up a large and increasing portion of the parenting demographic. According to Statistics Canada (2011a) for the period of 2006-2011, "Lone-parent families increased 8.0% over the same period. Growth was higher for male lone-parent families (+16.2%) than for female lone-parent families (+6.0%)" (para. 3). In 1976, stay-at-home fathers only accounted for 1 in 70 families that had a stay-at-home parent, but in 2015 that number rose to 1 in 10 (Statistics Canada, 2011b). Further, "The number of same-sex married couples nearly tripled between 2006 and 2011, reflecting the first five-year period for which same-sex marriage has been legal across the country" (Statistics Canada, 2011a, para. 6). These statistics show the growing demographic of single, stay-at-home, and gay fathers in Canada and how families are expanding from the traditional married and

heterosexual mother and father to include those that are non-traditional (single, stay-at-home, and gay).

Cabrera, Tamis-LeMonda, Bradley, Hofferth, and Lamb (2000) stated that the increase in single parenting in the United States is in part responsible for the progression towards accepting paternal involvement with children, paternal custody, and fathers seeking custody of their children. Further, Cabrera et al. (2000) argued that current paternal care for children is heavily linked to the contexts in which fathers live in the 21st century. More specifically, they stated that due to more women entering the workforce and an increase in wages for American women, fathers are more prone to seek involvement with their children and to be primary caregivers. It is thus abundantly clear that there is a need to include single, stay-at-home, and gay fathers in research, as they make up an important component of the parenting demographic. This is especially true given that the majority of research on non-traditional families focuses on the perspectives and roles of mothers and not fathers (Emmers-Sommer et al., 2003). When fathers are considered in research discussions on family contexts, they are often discussed in relation to their absenteeism and their physical and emotional distance from their children, and not in terms of their potential to nurture and care for their children (Emmers-Sommer et al., 2003). This is in part largely due to traditional masculine discourses in fatherhood, which do not consider fathers' emotional connectedness to their children (Messner, 1997).

Challenging Discourses of Masculinity in Fatherhood

There is currently little understanding of how masculinity and fatherhood perspectives impact men's lives, health, and families (Brussoni et al., 2013). Dominant discourses portray fathers as conventionally masculine: stoic, brave, and emotionally reserved. Nevertheless, recent research has suggested that masculinity is expanding to include nurture and care (Brussoni et al.,

2013). Fathers who hold more flexible perspectives on what masculinity entails may identify as more intimate and nurturing towards their children than those who subscribe to dominant or traditional beliefs (Benson, Silverstein, & Auerbach, 2005). Importantly, the nurture and care that fathers provide do not necessarily have to be physical, but can also be emotional and given through the provision of resources (e.g., cooking and reading) (Brussoni et al., 2013). In line with this, research has shown that while fathers may still identify with masculinity as encompassing risk, protection, and more traditional values, they also prioritize their emotional connectedness to their children (Brussoni et al., 2013).

Changing gender roles. Conventionally masculine and feminine parenting roles shape what behaviours are considered normal in the family context, with mothers often cooking, cleaning, and taking care of the children's needs, and fathers often building, fixing, and providing financially for their family (Doucet, 2004b; Medved, 2016). Single, stay-at-home, and gay fathers challenge traditional views on masculinity, such as working away-from home, being tough and brave, and being emotionally distant from their children (Brandth & Kvande, 1998; Messner, 1997). These are fathers who, on a daily basis, partake in a large variety of activities with their children, supervise their children, bathe and feed their children, and prioritize their children's wellness (Doucet, 2006). They often take on roles that were once perceived as motherly due to their closeness to their children (Doucet, 2004b).

Traditional discourses of masculinity in Canadian society construct gay men as less masculine than their heterosexual counterparts (Phua, 2007; Sanchez & Vilain, 2012) and rarely portray gay men getting their hands dirty, playing with their children, or engaging in conventionally masculine behaviours, such as participation in sport. Although many people believe that gay men may be effeminate or "less masculine" than their heterosexual counterparts,

researchers have argued that many gay men do not wish to be portrayed as effeminate (Sánchez & Vilain, 2012). Instead, many gay men identify with traditionally masculine behaviours (such as enjoying a beer with other men and enjoying sports) and seek partners who also exhibit traditionally masculine characteristics (Phua, 2007; Sanchez & Vilain, 2012).

Single, stay-at-home, and gay men “work in a female world” (Doucet, 2006, p. 705), as they fulfill roles that are largely considered to be mothering roles. Indeed, as Doucet (2006) argued, discourses surrounding caring in general are heavily tied to femininity and mothering. More specifically, caring for children is often associated with the nurture and care that a mother provides. In line with this, the societal feminization of safety places mothers at the forefront of safety research, which often means that fathers are not considered to be emotionally attached to children (Brussoni et al., 2013). Indeed, providing care for their children is sometimes misconstrued as perversion (e.g., taking their baby to a wellness clinic is misconstrued by mothers at the clinic as a man wanting to see their breasts while they breast-feed) and being active in the school-system is met with hesitation and distrust by school administrators and parents (Doucet, 2006). Acknowledging single, stay-at-home, and gay fathers’ ability to care for their children allows us to gain a better understanding of how these fathers contribute to the expansions and changes in masculinity that is currently taking place.

Fathers’ masculine identities can influence fathers’ engagement in risk-related play activities with their children (Brussoni et al., 2013; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). Fathers who identify as more conventionally masculine can identify as their family’s breadwinner and view themselves as people who encompass the role of protector for their families (Brussoni et al., 2013; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). Thus, another role that conventionally masculine fathers identify with is that of the risk taker (Brussoni et al., 2013; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). An

example of this would be protective fathers who value risk, but who also want to ensure that their children remain safe. They thus choose to participate in activity (such as climbing ladders) with their children and control their children's exposure to risk by setting rules (such as not being allowed to climb the ladder alone) (Brussoni et al., 2013). Thus, masculinity may influence parents' influence on their children's leisure pursuits, the risky strategies that are taught to their children, and how their children perceive risk. According to Cabrera et al. (2000), it is important to study the diversity of fathering perspectives and the father-role in the 21st century because of the shift of father-roles from prioritizing work to encompassing care and supervision with children in the household and child-rearing contexts. The research contained in this paper responds to Cabrera et al.'s call by examining single, stay-at-home, and gay fathers' perspectives of masculinity and how they influence their understandings of their children's outdoor risky play.

Theoretical Framework

My reasons for employing poststructural feminist theory for this research were twofold. First, poststructural feminist theorists are sensitive to populations of people who have been subjected, ostracized, and oppressed by dominant discourses (Weedon, 1988); this approach is thus an appropriate one for conducting research with single, stay-at-home, and gay fathers.. Second, poststructural feminist theory enabled me to use language, power relations, and discourse as platforms through which to better understand the socio-historical and political contexts in which the participants in this study live their lives (Weedon, 1988).

According to poststructural feminist thought, language is a site for the construction of meaning (Weedon, 1988). Language is thus a gateway to understand social phenomena and cultural experiences (Weedon, 1988). Power relations are sites of struggle and resistance, where power is exercised by multiple parties (Weedon, 1988). Poststructural feminist theories examine

power relations to uncover the mechanisms through which discourses are (re)produced (Weedon, 1988). Poststructural feminist theorists posit that discourses are sites where discussions, ideologies, and dialogues, both written and spoken, contribute to the production of knowledge (Weedon, 1988). Thus, dominant discourses serve to influence knowledge uptake and production by subjugating non-dominant discourses (Weedon, 1988).

Due to mothers, and not fathers, being produced as being children's primary caregivers (Brussoni, Olsen, Creighton, & Oliffe, 2013), it was imperative to examine the language, power relations, and discourses at work that result in single, stay-at-home, and gay fathers' perspectives of children's outdoor risky play being subjugated.

Methodology

Feminist methodology provides a lens through which to value and examine gender (Hesse-Biber, Leavy, & Yaiser, 2004) and serves as an excellent means through which to access and discuss perspectives on outdoor risky play as they relate to the gendered practice of fathering. Feminist methodology also provides a means of challenging gender discourses that exist in society (Taylor, 1998). One of the main tenets of feminist methodology is that all knowledge should be represented in research (Hesse-Biber et al., 2004). Thus, it is an excellent methodology to use to represent minority and underrepresented perspectives in society in general and in research (Hesse-Biber et al., 2004). Currently, single, stay-at-home, and gay fathers are populations who are discursively produced as being overtly feminine (Doucet, 2006b). This gender-based discourse and the exclusion of fathers, especially stay-at-home, gay, and same sex fathers, from past outdoor risky play research renders feminist methodology an appropriate lens for my research.

Methods

Participant Recruitment and Procedure

I recruited participants from three major Canadian cities: Montreal, Ottawa, and Toronto. Prior to commencing recruitment, the research received approval from the Research Ethics Board at the University of Ottawa (see Appendix 1). To be able to participate in the study, participants needed to be single, stay-at-home, or gay, understand and be able to communicate in the English language, be primary caregivers or have joint-custody of their children, and have at least one child in the 4-12 age range. My reason for recruiting fathers with children in the 4-12 age range was twofold. First, children of 4-6 years of age participate in unstructured, free, and pre-school based play in outdoor settings (Cardon, Van Cauwenberghe, Labarque, Haerens, & De Bourdeaudhuij, 2008), while children aged 6-12 adopt strategies for how to approach risk and danger and learn how to avoid injuries during play (Van Mechelen & Verhagen, 2005). Further, children of the 6-12 age range learn fair and safe play practices that they carry with them throughout their lives (Van Mechelen & Verhagen, 2005).

I was able to recruit participants in person in both Ottawa and Montreal. Due to the fact that I am based in Ottawa, I did not have enough time to recruit in person in Toronto. For all three cities, I sent recruit posters online to interested community and related organizations that represent single, stay-at-home, and gay fathers. I was present in both Montreal and Ottawa at various community organized events for single, stay-at-home, and gay fathers, and was available for people that were interested in my study to speak with them about potentially participating. After asking the owners and members, I posted flyers in Ottawa and Montreal in local single, stay-at-home, and gay father community organizations and centers. I also posted flyers in local gay bars after asking for permission from the owners. I recruited one father that was a public figure online and was active in the stay-at-home fathering community. I did this by sending a

Facebook message indicating that if he was interested, I would be able to speak about my research with him to see if he was interested in participating. When fathers indicated interest in participating, I would speak with them in person or send them information about the study over e-mail. I used snowball sampling (Cohen & Arieli, 2010) to recruit as well. This happened organically, as some of the fathers that indicated interest in participating indicated that their friends would also be interested. Thus, the already participating fathers sent the recruit posters to their interested friends and told their friends to contact me if they wished to participate. When fathers indicated that they would like to participate in the study, I met with them at locations of their choosing that were local and public. Two fathers that I knew from a personal standpoint met with me at their houses. Some interviews were conducted over the phone, as certain participants indicated an interest, due to time constraints, location, and preference, for speaking with me without meeting. A total of 12 fathers were interviewed: 6 single (3 primary custody, 3 split-custody), 4 stay-at-home, and 2 gay fathers. All participants except one are white, with the exception of one stay-at-home father (Mark), who is Asian-Canadian.

Table 1

Participant Information and Number of Interviews

Pseudo-Name	Semi-Structured Interview	Photo-Elicitation Interview	Single, Stay-at-Home, or Gay	Age of Children (S = Son, D = Daughter)
Jake	YES	YES	Single	D: 11, D: 13, D: 15
Peter	YES	NO	Single	S: 3, S: 6
John	YES	YES	Single	D: 2, D: 4

Brent	YES	NO	Single	D: 11, S: 20, S: 40, S: 45, D: 30, D: 30
Adam	YES	YES	Single	S: 4, S: 6
Ben	YES	NO	Single	S: 6, S: 9
Michel	YES	NO	Stay-at-Home	S: 2, S: 4
Brad	YES	NO	Stay-at-Home	D: 8, D: 11
Mark (AC)	YES	YES	Stay-at-Home	S: 7, S: 9
Kyle	YES	YES	Stay-at-Home	D: 5, S: 9, S: 11
West	YES	NO	Gay	S: 8, S: 10
Luke	YES	YES	Gay	S: 5, D: 5

I used two exploratory qualitative research methods: semi-structured interviews (Gill, Stewart, Treasure, & Chadwick, 2008) and photo-elicitation interviews (Richard & Lahman, 2015). Before all interviews commenced, the participants were provided with a consent form that allowed them to choose if they wanted to be recorded and quoted. I was granted permission to record and quote all conversation. The participants who wished to participate in the photo-elicitation interview were provided with a child consent form that requested that they read or have their children read the consent form. This was so that the children understood that their fathers were speaking to an interviewer about them and the children had a choice if they would like to have their photograph taken. All of the participants who participated in the photo-elicitation interviews permitted me to use the photographs, after personal identifiers were blurred, for academic or scholarly purposes. I used member checking after I transcribed the

interviews to ensure that participants felt comfortable with what they said and how I had transcribed the interviews. One participant expressed that he wanted me to change one piece of text to better reflect his perspective. None of the other participants requested changes.

Analysis

For this study, I employed critical discourse analysis (CDA), which was supported by my use of NVivo10™ software, to explore single, stay-at-home, and gay fathers' understandings of their children's outdoor risky play. CDA was well suited for my research, as this form of analysis is typically used to represent oppressed and subjugated perspectives and serve to correct imbalances that exist in society (Fairclough, Mulderrig, & Wodak, 2011). Indeed, Mogashoa (2014) posited that CDA is best suited as an analytic tool to foster representativeness for oppressed populations, as can be used to acknowledge how social issues are sites of struggle.

Willig (2003) developed a six-stage approach for researchers to efficiently use CDA. I thus followed Willig's (2003) framework by 1) familiarizing myself with the text (i.e., photos and transcripts) and discourses on fatherhood, masculinity, and outdoor risky play, and by transcribing the recorded text; 2) I compared the construction and portrayal of children and participants to one another in order to examine similarities and differences; 3) I examined how the discourses compared to one another; 4) I explored the position and context of each participant relative to the discourses on fatherhood, masculinity, and outdoor risky play; 5) I explored each participant's position in order to gain insight into whether or not there was opportunity for action (e.g., if perspectives on masculinity could challenge heteronormative gender displays in child injury prevention campaigns); 6) I examined the positioning of participants in the discourses to better understand the perspectives the participants have concerning masculinity and their children's engagement in outdoor risky play.

Results

My critical discourse analysis revealed the following discourses: masculinity and fatherhood are being redefined; fathers play an important role in their children's experiences of outdoor risky play; and fathers should enforce limits during their children's outdoor risky play.

Masculinity and Fatherhood are Being Redefined

The fathers in this study explained that masculinity and fatherhood are redefined when fathers take on roles that actively challenge the way fatherhood has typically been perceived. They argued that fathers are generally expected to exude a type of macho masculinity that discourages emotionally intimate connections with their children. In contrast, the fathers who were interviewed rejected the traditional masculine expectations placed on men by stressing their roles as fathers who encompass many different values and behaviours, including those that were considered within the realm of feminine responsibility and motherhood.

The fathers discussed the many ways through which masculinity and fatherhood are being redefined by providing examples of experiences with their own fathers or of fathers they had known. West, who did not have a father in his life when he was growing up, described what his friends shared with him about their experiences with their fathers: "I wasn't allowed to cry, he never hugged me...I hear this very often...I would just assume that's the kind of macho masculine fatherhood upbringing." Adam remembered his own father's lack of expressed emotions: "I think [fatherhood is] changing because I never saw my father cry, just one time in my whole life." Overall, the participants stated that their own fathers were less emotionally involved with them as children compared to the way they choose to be engaged with their own children.

All of the fathers, except two, attributed expressing emotion through affect and crying as masculine. The two fathers who did not associate masculinity with expressing emotion in this way held dominant perspectives on masculinity and believed that there was a separation between masculinity and femininity. For example, Brad, who did not associate masculinity with emotional expression in this way, said:

I try to play the role of someone who is ... bravery, courage, standing up for right things, which is similar to what a female would have to, but I guess in the eyes of my children, I'm more of a rock. I don't give in to my emotions as much.

The two fathers who framed masculinity outside of affect and crying believed that men and women can be both masculine and feminine. However, masculinity was associated with toughness and emotional reserve, while femininity was associated with intimacy and emotional expression. These two fathers verbally communicated with their children to express their feelings instead of demonstrating their emotions through affect and crying.

The fathers who believed that masculinity can encompass traditionally feminine attributes believed that masculinity is being redefined. When asked to describe what masculinity means as a father, Mark replied:

I think today, things are always changing, like, if you asked that say 50 years ago, 100 years ago, 200 years ago, there are stock answers right? Like being the strong silent type, being the provider, those sorts of things, and you can say from the other side like women are nurturing, caregiving... Right? But I think those lines are blurred.

Thus, fatherhood was redefined by the fathers who were interviewed as being involved and emotionally connected to their children, which helped to establish relationships that were central to their experiences of being fathers and being masculine. This idea was explained by Peter, who

said, “I’m a single, divorced father. My goal is that when they’re with me, I’m there...They’re happy, they’re safe, they’re comforted...give them comfort, warmth, security, and love.”

Fathers Play an Important Role in Their Children’s Outdoor Risky Play

When asked to describe their roles within their child’s outdoor risky play, the fathers described them as protection and supervision. Through the provision of care in outdoor risky play activities, the fathers encouraged their children to pursue outdoor risky play activities. For example, Peter, a father of two young boys, expressed a need to supervise his children and to protect them from danger. He recalled an instance when his sons were engaging in outdoor risky play that he believed was becoming dangerous.

So when I was playing with [my oldest son], he was actually on the side where if the ball passed him he could go down the cliff. I would always have to tell him, move forward, come closer, I don’t want you to fall over the cliff. But I would always be there, don’t get close to the cliff. Meanwhile [my younger son], whenever he was near the steps, I’d like bolt over there and be like, “grab my hand, I don’t want you to go to the steps.”

Indeed, Peter provided a quintessential example of how the fathers supervised risky play in order to mitigate injuries their children could experience. Kyle photographed his three children playing in the woods (see Figure 3) and said that although the play could be considered risky if his 5 year old daughter played alone, it was not risky if he or his older sons (aged 9 and 11) were there with her to supervise.

Figure 3.



The fathers noted that it is important to know how their children are feeling about the activities and environments in which they are engaged. Adam said he urges his sons to talk to him about their outdoor risky play experiences. When asked why he feels establishing communication with his sons is important, Adam said, “I think it helps. With my boys, I don’t want to be not close. I want them to be close, and if they feel bad, I want them to tell me. I don’t want them to hide something.” The desire to communicate with their children was voiced by all the fathers. The fathers especially wanted to know what upsets or injuries their children experienced when engaged in outdoor risky play. When his daughter has been injured during outdoor risky play, John said, “we’ll have discussions about it like, what did you do? How did

you feel? ...Would you do that again? Was it smart?" The fathers wanted to speak with their children about their children's injury experiences to mitigate their children's future experiences with injury during outdoor risky play. Although all the fathers were comfortable with discussing injuries after outdoor risky play, West preferred to speak with his children before they engaged in outdoor risky play to try to prevent any injury from occurring. He stated, "In general, I'm Mr. Safety. Don't run too fast, you might get hurt. Don't go too fast on the bike, you know, all those things." The fathers thus play an important role in their children's experiences with outdoor risky play by protecting and supervising their children and by establishing open communication about injury prevention and experiences.

Fathers Should Enforce Limits during their Children's Outdoor Risky Play

The fathers all believed that being a father meant enforcing limits when their children engaged in outdoor risky play. The fathers agreed that despite their children wanting to engage in outdoor risky play, the children needed to have some boundaries and limits in order to be kept safe. As a result, the fathers positioned discipline as synonymous with striking a balance between their children's safety and experiences of fun. Luke said that when his children are engaged in outdoor risky play, a "balance of having discipline and learning what's acceptable and not acceptable" was required. In accordance with this, Luke said that it was important for him to feel as though his children are enjoying their play activity while still being protected from serious harm. He documented himself swinging his son in the air at a local park (see Figure 2) and stated that this activity provides enjoyments for his son.

Figure 2.



Adam stated that while allowing his children to experience things for themselves when they are engaged in outdoor risky play was important, he also enforced rules to ensure safety. According to Adam, a father's role is to mitigate the potential dangers that their children may experience during outdoor risky play and, as a result, he considers himself strict at times.

For the fathers I interviewed, providing discipline for their children involved setting rules for their children's outdoor risky play. When Peter discussed his fathering style when his children engage in outdoor risky play, he said,

I can be pretty strict with them, like I want them to follow rules. So I think as a father even though I'm fun and engaged with them, I can lose my patience easily with them. I think I'm a good balance between the fun father [and the father] who's trying to maintain some discipline.

Luke responded to the question of what a good father is by saying, "it's the opposite of being rigid kinda thing...But sometimes you definitely have to - in terms of some level of safety...You

gotta put your foot down.” Thus, the fathers considered it good to provide their children with some limits because it meant that their children would be safer and less likely to experience serious injury. When Mark was asked if he allows his children to engage in outdoor risky play, he said, “I think [I’ll allow them to] just as long as they’re safe, uh, like, the risks are acceptable ...especially for young kids, they need their limits and they need to know what their limits are.” The fathers thus believed that it was their job as good fathers to enforce limits to outdoor risky play in order to keep their children safe.

Discussion

The present study places single, stay-at-home, and gay fathers at the forefront of the discussion on outdoor risky play, and it showcases the ways in which these fathers challenge dominant masculinity discourses (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Doucet, 2004b). The three identified discourses support the way that fathers’ expression of masculinity is discussed in the scholarly literature on fatherhood by attesting to the current redefinition of masculinity and fatherhood and how this relates to the fathers’ perspectives on outdoor risky play.

The results of this study are important in relation to the current state of concern surrounding children’s exposure to outdoor risky play (Tremblay et al., 2015). Currently, there is widespread concern about the decline in children’s engagement with outdoor, active, child-centered, and risky play (Tremblay et al., 2015). Fathers encourage their children’s risk more than mothers; however, the results of my study present the fathers as carers and protectors who enforce limits and boundaries on their children’s engagement in outdoor risky play. Importantly, the results of this study with single, stay-at-home, and gay fathers are similar to the results of research with heterosexual and secondary caregiving fathers.

Brussoni and colleagues (2013) used photo-elicitation interviews to explore personal connection, risk, and protection perspectives in relation to masculinity to gain insight into how these perspectives influenced their fathering practices. They explored perspectives of 25 fathers (all heterosexual, with three divorced fathers being primary caregivers). Brussoni et al. (2013) found that these fathers perceived risk-related activities as important for children to engage in, as the fathers believed they helped to foster children's self-esteem and confidence. They thus encouraged their children to engage in risky play in order for their children to challenge themselves and grow physically and mentally. The participants in Brussoni and colleagues' (2013) research believed that their children engaging in risk-related activity was a facilitator of their children's enjoyment. Further, omnipresent in their results were the fathers' perspectives on masculinity that encompassed being a protector for their children. This translated to their role as a father as protecting their children against experiencing injury, whereby some of the men but not the majority indicated that the removal of all risk from their children's environment was necessary. Finally, Brussoni and colleagues (2013) also found that the fathers wanted to connect emotionally with their children. Thus, they perceived their children as individuals with unique character traits whom they needed and wanted to better understand. The fathers were thus affectionate, engaged in routines outside of physical activity (such as reading and cooking), and provided nurture for their children. It was important for the fathers in their study to feel as if they had a more emotional connection with their children than the relationship they had with their own fathers when they were children. Importantly, the fathers' perspectives on masculinity, risk, and protection influenced their perspectives on their children's safety. Being emotionally connected with children and in tune with their needs provided safer experiences for their children

during physical activity. The fathers' role and beliefs concerning protection influenced their restrictions and allowances of risk-related activity for their children.

The similarities between Brussoni and colleagues' (2013) study and the present study are important to consider. My results showed that the single, stay-at-home, and gay fathers in my study believe that masculinity and fatherhood are being redefined. The fathers discussed this redefinition by providing evidence of the nurture and care they provide for their children during outdoor risky play by communicating with their children and asking their children about their children's experiences with outdoor risky play. They are attentive to their children and believe that masculinity and fatherhood should reflect the care they provide. Thus, the fathers held masculinity perspectives that directly influenced their perspectives on fatherhood. This was displayed when they discussed that their own values, attitudes, and beliefs surrounding what is important for a man (i.e., being protective, caring, and nurturing) influences their perspectives on fatherhood (i.e., being able to protect, care for, and nurture their children). Consequentially, these perspectives had an impact on their role in their children's outdoor risky play. When their children were engaging in outdoor risky play, the fathers felt the need to protect their children from danger, care for their children by enforcing limits, and nurture their children if their children were injured. The fathers actively challenged the dominant discourse surrounding masculinity and fatherhood that perpetuates the notion that fathers are unable to care (Doucet, 2006a, 2006b) by providing examples of how they are nurturing caregivers for their children. This runs contrary to dominant and pre-existing masculine discourses, as masculinity for men in general is often discussed in relation to violence and physical aggression (Messner, 1997).

The redefinition or expansion of masculinity that has taken shape over the past few decades, and arguably since the participants in this study were children, may thus influence

traditional and non-traditional fathers' understandings of their children's risky outdoor play regardless of sexuality and primary or secondary caregiving position. The redefinition of masculinity and fatherhood to encompass nurture and care as well as protection is becoming increasingly prominent in fathering research (Brussoni et al., 2013; Doucet, 2004, 2006a, 2006b; Goodsell & Meldrum, 2010). This expansion can be seen in the balance that fathers find between promoting their children's risky activity and protecting their children from injury (Brussoni & Olsen, 2011). The single, stay-at-home, and gay fathers in the present study demonstrated this balance through their enforcement of limits during their children's outdoor risky play and the important roles they play in their children's engagement in outdoor risky play. In this study, I found that enforcing limits, such as rule setting during outdoor risky play, was not used with an intention of aggression or punishment; rather, enforcing limits was used to navigate their children's safety.

Conclusion

Single, stay-at-home, and gay fathers need to have their perspectives heard in scholarly research on child injury prevention. Exploring their perspectives on masculinity and fatherhood in connection to their perspectives on outdoor risky play provides a unique opportunity to explore a great variety of kinds of fathers' influence on their children's outdoor risky play practices. While the fathers in this study showed strong similarities to fathers in studies with predominantly heterosexual fathers, there are important limitations to this study.

Only 12 fathers participated in the study, and there was not an equal representation of single, stay-at-home, and gay fathers. This research is thus in no way representative of all single, stay-at-home, and gay fathers. Nevertheless, it makes an important contribution to the field of

child injury prevention by providing an opportunity for these fathers to have a voice on matters they deem important.

The results of this study paint a picture of single, stay-at-home, and gay fatherhood as being intimately tied to children's outdoor risky play experiences. The fathers in this study believed that masculinity encompassed values that were once considered feminine, such as caring and nurturing; they believed that their many roles provide a unique opportunity to provide supervision, protection, and care to their children when their children engage in outdoor risky play; and they believed that good fathers enforce limits for their children during outdoor risky play in order to keep their children safe and protected from danger or serious injury.

Further examinations of single, stay-at-home, and gay fathers' perspectives on their year children's outdoor risky play are crucial. Further, it is important to consider other minority fathers' perspectives on this topic, such as adoptive, immigrant, and low socio-economic fathers. I encourage all readers to consider the current lack of knowledge on fathers' perspectives on many topics within child injury prevention, and the consequences that this may have on our understanding of fathers' roles in their children's safety. While this research makes a small contribution to our understanding of single, stay-at-home, and gay fathers' perspectives on their 4-12 year old children's outdoor risky play, it provides a much needed starting point for future studies.

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Chapter 4:
Conclusions

Throughout my Master's of Arts research, I was fortunate to learn about single, stay-at-home, and gay fathers' understandings of their 4-12 year old children's outdoor risky play. Dominant discourses concerning masculinity, fatherhood, and caring, have painted a picture of fathers as emotionally reserved, distant, and aggressive (Messner, 1997), ultimately resulting in the belief that fathers are unfit to be primary caregivers (Pedersen, 2012). By speaking with the single, stay-at-home, and gay fathers throughout my research, I was better able to understand the important roles they play in their children's engagement with outdoor risky play, and how they both resist and reinforce discourses of safety, masculinity, and fatherhood.

In this final section of my thesis, I discuss the important gaps in knowledge that my research addresses, the limitations of my research, and my final thoughts concerning the contributions my research makes to bridging a gap in knowledge that exists between the fields of family dynamics and child injury prevention.

Addressing Gaps in Knowledge

It is well documented that fathers have an important role in their children's experiences with outdoor risky play (Brussoni, Creighton, Olsen, & Oliffe, 2013; Brussoni & Olsen, 2011; Creighton, Brussoni, Oliffe, & Olsen, 2015). Fathers spend an increasing amount of time with their children during active play (Brussoni & Olsen, 2011). They are also more likely than mothers to participate in exploratory play with their children and to promote their children's risky activity (Brussoni & Olsen, 2011). We also know that fathers' perspectives of masculinity can influence the father-roles they adopt and their encouragement and/or restriction of their children's risky play (Brussoni et al., 2013). This is because parenting is a gender practice, and fathers feel social pressures to conform to gender stereotypes (Creighton et al., 2015). Fathers are thus continually reassessing and constructing their identities based on their interactions with their

children and families, which strongly influences the values, attitudes, and beliefs that fathers have towards child-rearing (Creighton et al., 2015).

While studies have showcased how fathers' perspectives of masculinity can influence their perspectives on their children's outdoor risky play and child injury prevention (Brussoni et al., 2013), these studies have not been conducted with single, stay-at-home, or gay fathers. Further, there is a lack of information available on the influence of single, stay-at-home, and gay fathers' perspectives of masculinity on their perspectives of their children's outdoor risky play. As a result, the two studies presented in my thesis examine single, stay-at-home, and gay fathers' perspectives of their 4-12 year old children's outdoor risky play and masculinity for the first time in research on children's outdoor risky play.

I argue that my research makes two important contributions to the field of children's outdoor risky play: 1) I make a novel addition to the literature by examining single, stay-at-home, and gay fathers' perspectives of their 4-12 year old children's outdoor risky play; and 2) I illustrate the ways in which single, stay-at-home, and gay fathers' perspectives on children's outdoor risky play shows a shift in understandings of masculinity and fatherhood.

My first study, which addressed single, stay-at-home, and gay fathers' perspectives on their 4-12 year old children's outdoor risky play and how it relates to discourses of "good" fathering, makes a unique contribution to the scholarly literature on safety. I identified five key discourses: single, stay-at-home, and gay fathers held perspectives on their children's outdoor risky play children's play is safer now than when the participants were children; fathers need to know what each child needs for the child to be safe outdoors; fathers need to protect their children from danger; it's good to expose children to outdoor risky play; and experiencing scrapes and bruises is a part of growing up. I showed how these discourses both perpetuate and

challenge dominant discourses on good fathering. They reinforced dominant discourses on good fathering by identifying that the fathers felt a need to protect their children in outdoor risky play environments (Holt, 2008; Pedersen, 2012). Further, they perpetuated dominant discourses on good parenting, and in particular good fathering (Pedersen, 2012), by identifying that exposing children to outdoor risky play and scrapes and bruises is good for children's mental and physical development. Whereas dominant parenting discourses portray the good mother, as opposed to the good father, as prioritizing children's safety (Pedersen, 2012), the fathers in my research challenged this by expressing their desire to keep their children safe. They thus navigate the existing tension that exists between fathers' simultaneous subscription to dominant roles of protector and risk-taker (Doucet, 2006a, 2006b). The fathers did this by identifying with the role of protector for dangerous but not risky play, and by limiting their children's exposure to danger.

My second study, which addressed the influence of single, stay-at-home, and gay fathers' masculinity perspectives on their understandings of their 4-12 year old children's outdoor risky play, complemented the results of the first study by delving further into fatherhood, masculinity, and outdoor risky play. The second study makes a unique contribution to the scholarly literature on family dynamics and child injury prevention by expanding on the work of Brussoni and colleagues (2013). The results of the second study provide evidence of the similarities between traditional and non-traditional fathers' perspectives on the expansions and (re)defining of masculinity and fatherhood and the consequences that this expansion and redefinition has on fathers' perspectives of safety. I identified three discourses identified in the second study: masculinity and fatherhood are being redefined; fathers play an important role in their children's experiences of outdoor risky play; and fathers should enforce limits during their children's outdoor risky play. Together, the discourses suggest that the fathers' masculinity perspectives

influence their perspectives on their children's outdoor risky play. The fathers discussed that what is important to them as men translates to what is important to them as fathers, and vice versa. Thus, their perspectives on masculinity as encompassing nurture and care translated to the fathers' attitudes towards outdoor risky play reflecting the nurture and care they provide for their children. The fathers were thus attentive to their children's needs and provided support and supervision to their children during their children's outdoor risky play activities.

Together, my two studies challenge dominant discourses on masculinity, fatherhood, and how they relate to safety. The fathers in the studies held masculinity perspectives that reflected their desire to nurture, care, and protect their children. The first two attributes are usually associated with mothers and mothering (Pedersen, 2012). Importantly, the fathers in this study did not see nurture and caring as being a feminine attribute, but saw it as a part of the way that they expressed masculinity and fatherhood. Indeed, rather than focusing on physical protection in their role as protectors, these fathers also focused on protecting their children's emotional well-being as it related to outdoor risky play. Thus, the fathers' perspectives on their 4-12 year old children's outdoor risky play reflected broader understandings of the ways in which masculinity and fatherhood can be expressed.

While dominant discourses on safety portray the good mother as more concerned with children's safety than the good father (Pedersen, 2012), the fathers in this thesis research did have anxieties, worries, and concerns about their children's safety during engagement in outdoor risky play. These concerns did lead to a reinforcement of the discourses of fathers as protectors, but this understanding needs to be nuanced to include protection as including emotional care, too.

This research also presents opportunities for practical applications, especially for policy making and safety messaging. The single, stay-at-home, and gay fathers who participated in this research play important roles in their children's engagement in outdoor risky play and safety. It is my hope that this research shows the importance of including single, stay-at-home, and gay fathers in child safety discussions. Further, policy makers need to consider single, stay-at-home, and gay fathers' role in mitigating children's experiences of injury. Single, stay-at-home, and gay fathers should also be considered within safety marketing and messaging, as child safety advocates, including child safety campaigns, need to effectively target and be inclusive of non-traditional fathers.

Limitations

There were two major limitations to my research: 1) I am not a parent and I do not identify as male, gay, or gender-queer, and 2) there was not an equal representation of single, stay-at-home, and gay fathers in the studies.

When approaching this research, I considered myself an outsider to the community. I did not have experience working with single, stay-at-home, or gay fathers. In order to further gain insights into the challenges that single, stay-at-home, and gay fathers may face on a day-to-day basis, I attended various single, stay-at-home, and gay father community events around Ottawa and Montreal. I spoke with fathers at the events and explained that it was my hope to work with single, stay-at-home, and gay fathers in my research to challenge dominant masculine and heteronormative fathering discourses. In addition, I was also a member of the Canadian Institute for Gender and Sexual Diversity for a period of three months. During this time, I helped with various national campaigns to promote awareness for LGBTQ+ (lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, transsexual, queer, and other) individuals. I met with many people who provided me with

excellent criticisms and comments for my research. Thus, before my research began, my approach to my research was already informed by members of single, stay-at-home, and gay fathering communities. I used their insights to strengthen my research and to ensure that the process was conducted in a respectful manner. An example of how I used their comments to strengthen the research proposal was that gay fathers in particular voiced concern regarding meeting with me in person for the interviews. They did not want their anonymity to be jeopardized, as gay fathers face daily judgements for adopting children. I thus mentioned the judgements they face throughout my thesis, as it was important to indicate that participating in this research was not an easy feat for many of the fathers and their participation showcased their courage and their dedication to having their voices heard. I also assured the fathers that they and their children would remain anonymous in the research. Thus, although I was an outsider to these populations, I made efforts to establish trust and connectedness with the participating fathers. I thank these fathers for teaching me the importance of establishing trust, connectedness, and communication in research. From these fathers I also learned the importance of reflecting on how I identify within and across research, societies, cultures, and communities, as my own positionality as a researcher will always influence those with whom I am in direct and indirect contact throughout my studies and life in general.

Although there were not equal numbers of single, stay-at-home, and gay fathers who participated in my research, the research itself, to the best of my knowledge, is the first of its type to examine these fathers' perspectives of outdoor risky play in the literature on child injury prevention. As a result, each perspective nevertheless made a significant contribution. As was previously mentioned, single, stay-at-home, and gay fathers are difficult to recruit for a variety of reasons. I was thus thankful after months of recruitment to have the number of fathers that I did

who participated in the research. Each father provided unique viewpoints on fatherhood, masculinity, and outdoor risky play that stemmed from their own experiences with their families and children.

Future Research

There are many factors need to be explored in future research concerning single, stay-at-home, and gay fathers' influences on children's outdoor risky play. Examples of factors that should be addressed include socio-economic status (SES), neighbourhood (e.g., suburban, city, and rural), and ethnicity.

Currently, children who live in low SES households and in poor neighborhoods do not always have access to safe play (Reading, Haynes, & Shenassa, 2005). Compared to mid and high SES households in wealthier neighbourhoods, children in low SES households in poorer neighborhoods have less access to transportation to safe play facilities such as playgrounds, less access to safety communications such as road traffic signs, and greater access to hazardous environments (Reading et al., 2005). Further, children in low SES households and who reside in poorer neighbourhoods can be exposed to violence and crime (Reading et al., 2005). Importantly, studies show that children who reside in deprived and poor neighbourhoods, or in low SES households, experience more injury than children who do not reside in these households and neighbourhoods (Reading et al., 2005). Indeed, parents' perceptions of neighborhood safety influence their children's outdoor play activity. Weir, Etelson, and Brand (2006) compared perceptions of neighborhood safety and children's outdoor activity. They studied the perceptions of 283 poor inner-city and middle-class suburban community parents of 5-10 year old children in New York. The goal of their research was to study the degree to which neighborhood safety concerns limit children's outdoor play. The researchers found that parents of children in the poor

inner-city community had greater anxiety about allowing their children to play outdoors. Weir and colleagues (2006) found that the children in the poor inner-city community spent less time engaged in outdoor play compared to the children in the middle-class suburban community. The results of this study attest to how SES and neighborhood influence parental perspectives on children's outdoor play and thus children's engagement in outdoor play (Weir et al., 2006).

The ethnic backgrounds of participants are also important to consider in the context of the current research. City demographics can impact children's engagement in physical activity and thus influence these children's play (Trigwell, Murphy, Cable, Stratton, & Watson, 2015). More specifically, ethnic minority children may face challenges to engaging in physical activity (Trigwell et al., 2015). An example of this is that Muslim girls can face difficulties accessing physical activity opportunities that are culturally suited to their needs (Trigwell et al., 2015). Thus, ethnicity is important to consider in outdoor risky play research, as there are cultural and religious influences on parents' perspectives on their children's physical activity in general (Trigwell et al., 2015).

Concluding Thoughts

It is my hope that this thesis serves as an important starting point for better understanding single, stay-at-home, and gay fathers' perspectives of outdoor risky play in child injury prevention research. My research has complicated our understanding of fathering, masculinities, and child-rearing, as the results of my research showcase the caring and nurturing that single, stay-at-home, and gay fathers' provide for their children in the context of their facilitation of their children's participation in outdoor risky play. In order to gain further insights into fathers' influence on children's development in outdoor risky play, it is crucial to explore further fathers'

perspectives on their children's outdoor risky play – especially the perspectives of fathers who may not identify with dominant and heteronormative masculine fathering roles.

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Contributions

This research was designed and developed by Michelle Emma Eileen Bauer. She played a primary role in the theorization, analysis, and writing of the thesis. Dr. Audrey Giles supported all aspects of the dissertation's development, theorization and analysis, and provided assistance and input into writing and reviewing the final product. Both papers will be published with Bauer as first author and Giles as second author.



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Ethics Approval Notice Health Sciences and Science REB

Principal Investigator / Supervisor / Co-investigator(s) / Student(s)

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This is to confirm that the University of Ottawa Research Ethics Board identified above, which operates in accordance with the Tri-Council Policy Statement (2010) and other applicable laws and regulations in Ontario, has examined and approved the ethics application for the above named research project. Ethics approval is valid for the period indicated above and subject to the conditions listed in the section entitled "Special Conditions / Comments".

During the course of the project, the protocol may not be modified without prior written approval from the REB except when necessary to remove participants from immediate endangerment or when the modification(s) pertain to only administrative or logistical components of the project (e.g., change of telephone number). Investigators must also promptly alert the REB of any changes which increase the risk to participant(s), any changes which considerably affect the conduct of the project, all unanticipated and harmful events that occur, and new information that may negatively affect the conduct of the project and safety of the participant(s). Modifications to the project, including consent and recruitment documentation, should be submitted to the Ethics Office for approval using the "Modification to research project" form available at:

<http://www.research.uottawa.ca/ethics/forms.html>

Please submit an annual report to the Ethics Office four weeks before the above-referenced expiry date to request a renewal of this ethics approval. To close the file, a final report must be submitted. These documents can be found at: <http://www.research.uottawa.ca/ethics/forms.html>

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the Ethics Office at extension 5387 or by e-mail at: ethics@uOttawa.ca.

Semi-Structured Interview Guide

1. Would you be able to tell me a bit about yourself?
2. How many children do you?
3. How old are your children?
4. How would you describe yourself as a parent?
5. Can you tell me a little bit about your children?
6. In your own words, what makes someone a good parent?
7. What does the word “masculine” mean to you?
8. Do you consider yourself masculine? If so, how so? If not, why?
9. Do you think that how a man identifies with masculinity influences his relationships with his children?
10. Do you think it influences your relationship with your child?
11. How would you describe your relationship with your child?
12. How often would you say your child plays outdoors during the week?
13. Do you feel differently about your child playing outdoors compared to when they play indoors?
14. Has your child ever been injured playing outdoors? If so, did that change how you viewed his/her play behaviour?
15. When your child plays outdoors, do you ever feel worried about how they’re playing or who/what they’re playing with? If so, why do you feel worried about those activities? If not, why do you feel comfortable?
16. When your child is playing outdoors, do they ever play with other children? If so, how do they play together?
17. How do you feel about your child playing on playgrounds, school grounds, or streets?
18. In your own words, how would you describe your child’s play style outdoors?
19. Does your child ever participate in outdoor play that you think is risky?
20. How do you feel about letting your child play alone or without supervision?
21. Are you ever worried about your child being unintentionally injured outside?
22. Do you feel the need to protect your child as they play outdoors?
23. Can letting your children engage with risky play ever be considered good?
24. In your own words, how do you keep your child safe?
25. Do you think your partner has a different tolerance for allowing your child to engage in risky play than do you?

Photo-Elicitation Interview Guide

1. How did you feel about taking photographs of your child's risky play behaviours?
2. How did you feel about your children being exposed to risky play?
3. Were there play behaviours that you found risky that occurred frequently?
4. Why did you consider these behaviours or circumstances risky?
5. Were there similarities in what you found risk-related since the last time we spoke?
6. Were there differences in what you found risk-related since the last time we spoke?
7. Did you find any of these behaviours very risky compared to the others depicted?
8. Do you think any of these photographs depict dangerous play behaviour?
9. Did you engage in any activities depicted in the photographs with your children?
10. When you look at these photographs, how do you feel now, looking back, about your child playing in that context?
11. Do you feel as if the environments depicted in the photographs are environments that your child is exposed to on a more regular basis?
12. Were you concerned that your child would be injured when they engaged with these behaviours?
13. Was your child ever injured when s/he engaged with these behaviours?
14. As a parent, is it ever ok to expose your child to risk?
15. What do you think the consequences are of children engaging in risky play behaviours?
16. How do these consequences relate to a child's development?
17. Were there any risky play behaviours, environments, or contexts depicted in the photographs that you were surprised by?
18. Did your partner capture any behaviours, environments, or contexts that you were surprised by?
19. Do you feel as if your child wants to engage with risky play behaviour?
20. Does how your child plays outdoors now differ from how you played when you were a child?