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Opportunities and limitations of poor South African fathers

The Child Support Grant and the capabilities of fathers to practice fatherhood in
South Africa

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This thesis is dedicated to
the fathers of South Africa



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1. Introduction

1936 - *“Fathers also are often devoted to their children, and make much of them when small, carrying them about in their arms, fondling them, playing with them, and teaching them to dance”*

(Hunter as cited in Wilson 2006)

1984 – *“My children are not living...In order for us to live we should eat. But now I am not working it is just like these hands of mine have been cut off and I am useless. Now life for my children will be difficult, they will scarcely eat. Now that I am not working – I do not know what I shall do or what I shall take and put against what.”*

(Thabane and Guy as cited in Wilson 2006)

These two citations about fatherhood experienced by poor black fathers in South Africa represent different social contexts, at different moments in time. The first represents fatherhood in a cohesive society in the province KwaZulu-Natal with rich family, network and neighborhood connections (Wilson 2006). The second represents fatherhood in times of severe poverty during apartheid. The citations symbolize changes in family life over the past decennia in South Africa. Two key factors seem to contribute to these changes. First, the historical legacy of institutionalized racial inequality, known as apartheid, in which black men were infantilized and traditional family life deeply disrupted. Second, high unemployment rates which persists in South Africa and affect young black men the most (Morrell and Richter 2006). This historical legacy and material conditions place constraints on black men and fathers.

Fatherhood in South Africa is a controversial issue. With the recent celebration of father's day in South Africa this was remarkable. Commercials were not only focused on children in order to let them buy presents to surprise their fathers but also on fathers themselves. In the media, by the government and social organizations fathers were urged to take more responsibility.

Jimmy Manyi, the government spokesperson, said:

“All fathers today, whether biological or not, they get spoiled by everybody around them, but we are saying to fathers use today as a day to reclaim your position in your families. Bring back what is meant to be, provide leadership, make sure that children grow knowing what are the right things and what are the wrong things”

(SABC.co.za)

This discourse stems from severe issues around fathers and fatherhood in South Africa. High abuse rates perpetrated by men and large numbers of absent fathers make the image of fathers mostly negative (Morrel and Richter 2006). On the other hand, face fathers the above described barriers that limit their opportunities to practice father roles positively. Men worry about how they can continue being fathers and husbands if they are unemployed (Khunou 2006). It makes it difficult to conform to the traditional father roles.

This research aims to shed more light on what present poor black fathers themselves think and do. The analysis focuses on the way structural conditions may affect fatherhood, with emphasis on social policy. In a realm of constraining tendencies on the practice of fatherhood, this might be a factor that changes the opportunities of fathers. In this research the focus is on a specific child development policy: the Child Support Grant (CSG). The CSG is a cash transfer to a primary caregiver aimed at reducing child poverty. Previous research shows that it affects gender dynamics by enhancing women's power and control over their households (Patel et al. 2012). The impact of the CSG on fathers has not been studied yet.

The purpose of this study

The objective of this research is to enhance understanding on how fathers perceive their fatherhood and if they see the CSG facilitating or constraining their opportunities as a father. This broadens the knowledge about the impact of the CSG by which policymakers can be informed. The data can also help to develop other appropriate interventions for poor fathers.

2. Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework will start with an exploration of how the practice of fatherhood is conceptualized. This conceptualization will then be used to study fatherhood in the South African context. After that, there will be reflection upon the way fatherhood is socially constructed in South Africa. In this analysis the relationship between fatherhood and the CSG is a key point of interest. Finally, the capabilities approach of Amartya Sen is introduced. This approach is used to capture the opportunities of fathers to practice fatherhood and how the CSG affects them.

2.1 The practice of fatherhood

Fathers may be biological, adoptive and informal. Fathers may live with their children, live apart from their children or live partly with their children. Fathers may be married, divorced or never married to the children's mother. Fathers may live with the children's mother, live apart from the children's mother or live partly with their children's mother (Marsiglio et al. 2008). Father's may be nurturing, breadwinners, disengaged and/or abusive (Russell 1999). Consequently diverse forms of fatherhood arrangements exist (Marsiglio et al. 2008). This section explores conceptualizations of the practice of fatherhood, which includes the following dimensions: paternal motivation for involvement, types of paternal involvement and behavior related to it.

Scholarly interest in fatherhood emerged in the 1980s and expanded in the 1990s (Marsiglio et al. 2000). Over the years the conceptualization of paternal involvement has been expanded. Pleck (1997) made one of the first attempts to categorize what paternal involvement means and how to measure it. Pleck (1997) distinguishes between three components. The first component is engagement which refers to direct interaction between father and child in terms of care, play or leisure. The second one is the father being available or accessible to the child. The third component is responsibility for the child's well-being. This last component differs from the actual caring (Pleck 1997). Many scholars have built on this conceptualization, broadened and expanded it (Marsiglio et al. 2000). Marsiglio et al. (2008) outline "the state of the art" of paternal involvement theory. They underscore the multiple and wide ranging parameters of the practice of fatherhood and show how it is related to the diverse fatherhood

arrangements. In this research this conceptualization is used to define and explore the practice of fatherhood.

The practice of fatherhood is defined as “emphasizing men’s positive, wide-ranging, and active participation in their children’s lives” (Marsiglio et al. 2008: 279). It can be divided into three dimensions: paternal motivation, paternal involvement and paternal influence (Marsiglio et al. 2008). Paternal motivation refers to reasons why men would want to participate in their children’s lives. They can have various motives to become involved as a father. Some of them are the love for their children, pressures to act as masculine adult males, early family experiences and perceptions about the extent children need their involvement or financial resources. For the second dimension the identified components are engagement, accessibility, responsibility and cognitive representations of involvement. Engagements are direct interactions with children. Accessibility involves activities regarding supervision and the potential for interaction. Responsibility refers to the father taking final sense of duty over the child’s well-being. Cognitive representations of involvement refer to mind states such as anxiety, worry and contingency planning related to a child’s well-being (Marsiglio et al 2008). The third dimension of the practice of fatherhood is the influence of fathers on children. According to Marsiglio et al. (2008), the four general features of paternal influence are nurturance and provision of care, moral and ethical guidance, emotional, practical, and psychosocial support of one’s partner and economic provision. These features of paternal influence are important for children’s well-being and development.

Dominant conceptualizations of father’s roles change over time. For example, Lamb (2000) describes the different dominant paternal roles in American social history. This has changed from being the moral teacher and guide, to having responsibility for breadwinning, to being a role model for especially sons, and finally to being a nurturing and active father. These changes have been influenced by processes like industrialization, economic disruption and dislocation, labor market change and demands for gender equality (Lamb 2000). So fatherhood changes particularly when a society is in transition. In the next section these changes will be analyzed in the specific South African context. It will give insight in the history of fatherhood in this country and its dimensions.

A history of fatherhood in South Africa

In South Africa also, dominant conceptualizations of fatherhood changed over time.

Traditionally in black African culture, fatherhood was not an achieved status but an ascribed one (Lesejane 2006). It involved responsibilities like moral authority, final responsibility in family affairs, provide material needs for the family, protect the family against threats and function as role model for especially the young men (Lesejane 2006). A number of rituals were established in traditional African societies to sustain fatherhood. These aspects of traditional father roles have not disappeared, but since then some changes occurred.

Fatherhood in South Africa has been strongly affected by historical events. Forced labor migration during apartheid shaped conditions for black fathers (Morrell and Richter 2006).

Black men were mostly separated from their families and had to work under difficult and inhuman circumstances. This has produced profound impact on South African black men and family structures. Caring was largely considered a task for women and this was enforced through the separation of black men from their families. These conditions have limited the experience of men with fatherhood during a large part of the 20th century (Morrell and Richter 2006).

Post-apartheid South Africa is however changing in many respects. On the one hand, it seems that fathers want to extent their fatherhood and be more involved in caring (Richter 2006). Richter (2006: 63) points out that many men indicate that they want to be more involved in their children's live. On the other hand, absence of men within households wherein children are growing up and the lack of involvement of fathers in children's care remain widespread. In 1998 about 42 percent of children lived only with their mothers and 1 percent lived only with their fathers (Morrell and Richter 2006). Apartheid legacy causes lasting separation between employment and family life for many South Africans (Madhavan et al. 2008). Men and women tend to migrate to find work and for that reason households and kin groups are often spatially spread (Madhavan et al. 2008). Another important reason for men's lack of involvement in children's lives is the level of poverty and unemployment (Holborn and Eddy 2011). Gender norms assume that men provide the financial means for their families (Redpath et al. 2008). Financial limits to provide children with resources make fathers feel like failures and consequently they may be excluded or voluntarily exclude themselves from their families (Holborn and Eddy 2011; Redpath et al. 2008). Also, the HIV/AIDS epidemic magnifies father absence. As a result of HIV/AIDS many fathers (and mothers) will or have already become infected, turn ill and will without treatment eventually die (Desmond and Desmond

2006). The HIV/AIDS epidemic has serious implications for the children of sick or late parents as it makes it more difficult for parents to support their children both in care work and in earning money. As a consequence of the above outlined reasons the dominant image of fathers in contemporary South Africa has become largely negative.

Practicing fatherhood in South Africa

Paternal motivation, paternal involvement and paternal influence are considered as key aspects of the practice of fatherhood (Marsiglio et al. 2008). Here this conceptualization will be reconsidered with respect to the South African context. The first aspect of the practice of fatherhood is paternal motivation. Men's motives to be involvement as fathers can be diverse as they might relate to a wide range of dynamics. A first dynamic that might influence paternal motivation is men's perception of the need of paternal involvement and recourses (Marsiglio et al. 2008). Fathers may observe this need as many children grow up in poverty and have increased care needs due to the HIV/AIDS epidemic (Holborn and Eddy 2011). Whether they anticipate on this observation might depend on their availability of recourses to help. Another dynamic that may influence paternal motivation are early family experiences of men (Marsiglio et al. 2008). In South Africa these experiences have been limited during apartheid what may weaken paternal motivation. A third dynamic that might influence paternal motivation is social pressure to act as masculine adult males (Marsiglio et al. 2008). Madhavan et al. (2008) point out that claims on fathers are socially legitimated in South Africa. Social pressures are therefore likely to be in accordance with dominant perceptions on fatherhood. The current negative conceptualization of fatherhood in South Africa (Morrell and Richter 2006) might either put increased pressure on fathers to get involved or it might weaken pressure as expectations of fathers to be involved are low.

The second dimension of the practice of fatherhood is type of paternal involvement. Aspects of it are engagement, accessibility, responsibility and cognitive representations of involvement (Marsiglio et al. 2008). Engagement refers to direct interactions between fathers and children and accessibility involves the potential of father and child to interact. Consequently engagement and accessibility are involvements that assume physical presence of fathers. Madhavan et al. (2008) argue however that the involvements of fathers with their children are poorly measured through recording co-residence in South Africa. Households include people living in more than one location and individuals can be member of more than

one household. In order to take account of paternal engagement and accessibility in South Africa one needs to move away from the assumption that engagement and accessibility merely hold for fathers that are physically present. Despite physical separation engagements and accessibility may continue. Engagement of fathers living (periodically) apart from their children may include calling with their children and sending text messages or emails to their children. Accessibility is about if a father can respond to a child in need. The possibility to react may imply physical closeness but fathers that live at a distance can also respond to a child in need. For example, if a child is in need someone might call the father and consequently the father can respond. Responsibility is a type of paternal involvement that refers to the extent in which the father takes ultimate responsibility over a child's well-being. This includes fathers assuring that children have clothes to wear, being fed, being looked after and go to school. Taking responsibility might be more difficult for fathers who have little recourses. Factors as poverty and unemployment may limit the ability of fathers to take responsibility. The final type of paternal involvement is cognitive representations of involvement which refer to mind states related to the child's well-being. Worry, anxiety or contingency planning by fathers regarding a child's well-being are a type of involvement that does not presupposes that father and child are physically close. Regarding the South African context this is a relevant indicator of paternal involvement since many fathers live (partly) away from their children and the well-being of children in poor black communities is often undermined.

The third aspect of the practice of fatherhood is paternal influence. Marsiglio et al. (2008) highlight four key features of paternal influence on children. They can be linked to theory about the importance of fathers for children. The first manifestation of paternal influence is nurturance and provision of care. Through this process cultural capital (specific forms of knowledge and attitudes) and human capital (skills and knowledge) can be transferred from father to child (Lesejane 2006; Richter 2006). Gender and age of the children seem to affect the importance of paternal care and nurturance. Young children need more care and boys and girls are affected differently by paternal attention. Nonresident fathers are restricted in their opportunities to nurture and care for children (Marsiglio et al. 2008). Being a father in South Africa, as in many cultures, is not so much associated with caring and nurturing (Redpath et al. 2008). The second dimension of paternal influence is moral and ethical guidance. This aspect may contribute to the cognitive development and emotional well-being of children (Datta 2007; Richter 2006). This is a space where human capital, cultural capital and social

capital may be transferred from father to child. Social capital includes social relations and network (Richter 2006). Gender effects apply also to this second feature of paternal influence. Among girls father's presence indicates higher self-esteem, lower levels of risky sexual behavior and better ability to form and maintain romantic relationships (Richter 2006). The presence of a father provides boys with a culturally appropriate model of male behavior and has a positive effect on their social competence, behavior control and school success (Richter 2006). Fatherly guidance is also characterized as authoritative which is regarded as a parenting style that has a positive influence on child outcomes (Marsiglio et al. 2000). Nonresident fathers are limited in their opportunities to provide children with moral and ethical guidance. Traditionally in African culture, moral and ethical guidance was an important aspect of the father role (Lesejane 2006). The third feature of paternal influence is emotional, practical, and psychosocial support of partners. This feature may be important for children to learn about appropriate and healthy gender relations (Marsiglio et al. 2008). Resident and nonresident fathers may have the same opportunities to support partners. The fourth feature of paternal influence is economic provision. This feature may include the transfer of financial capital from father to child. Financial capital refers to the transfer of money and income (Richter 2006). In the South African context men are primarily regarded as providers. The legal system mirrors this social norm. The biological father of a child has the obligation by law to pay maintenance orders in proportion to his means (Khunou 2006) and only women appear eligible for maternity leave (Redpath et al. 2008). This entrenches notions of women as caregivers and men as providers.

Influence of fathers can also be negative. First, male presence in households makes children more prone to experiencing domestic violence (Datta 2007; Richter 2006). In South Africa more than 25,000 children are sexually abused each year and the perpetrators of this abuse are overwhelmingly household members and very often fathers (Richter et al. 2004). Also, children may learn unjust gender attitudes from their present fathers. Unhealthy or unjust (gender) relationships within a family can be copied by children later on in their lives. Furthermore, the distribution of resources within the household tends to be less equal in households with present fathers (Datta 2007).

2.2 The social construction of fatherhood

So far the conceptualization of the practice of fatherhood is analyzed and discussed in relation to the South African context. In the following section it is argued that ideas about fatherhood are socially constructed and may be influenced by a range of social dimensions including social policy. It is important to recognize how “the meanings of fatherhood, both as a status and role-making process, are institutionally and interpersonally constructed and negotiated” (Marsiglio et al. 2008: 287). Fatherhood is defined as the social role that men undertake to be involved with their children (Morrel and Richter 2006: 18). The practice of fatherhood is embedded in the social construction of fatherhood. It therefore needs to be understood that the perceptions of fathers on fatherhood are influenced by individual, interpersonal, macro and cultural elements (Marsiglio et al. 2008). Factors that influence the construction of fatherhood, as set out by Datta (2007), are discussed below.

First, fatherhood is a role that is constructed by men. The father role relates to ideas about masculinity. Dominant ideas about masculinity put pressure on men to successfully perform its functions. Failure to fulfill these roles may cause men to retreat from responsible fathering (Datta 2007). Second, fatherhood is a role that is constructed by women and children, and in relation to motherhood and childhood. What mothers do affect fathers and vice versa. Parenting roles are gendered. Meaning and practice of parenthood differs generally between men and women. Generally, mothers and fathers have different relationships with sons and daughters (Datta 2007). The relationship between fatherhood and motherhood is associated with power differentials. Fathers tend to have more power compared to mothers. Third, the construction of fatherhood is influenced by structural forces (Datta 2007). Fathers can choose how to behave but this choice is constrained by constructed and negotiated options (Morrell and Richter 2006). A (negative) conceptualization of fatherhood might be affected by structural forces like a lack of resources, insufficient opportunities to combine work and family, inadequate social policies, programs, laws and social incentives (Datta 2007; Richter 2006). Individual behavior change of fathers must be understood within wider structural changes (Datta 2007). Structural forces can either limit or facilitate the opportunities of fathers to be involved in their children’s lives.

Definitions of the father as a social status in South Africa are highly related to employment. Paid work is extremely important for the social construction of fatherhood (Khunou 2006). It is widely acknowledged that it is impossible to establish father status as men if you do not

work. Increases in unemployment rates mean that a large number of men cannot find a paid job. Men become unable to undertake the social responsibilities associated with fatherhood. Khunou (2006: 39) points out that the absence of fathers, widespread in black families, often is a reflection of the inabilities of most fathers to provide. The inability to provide weakens father's opportunities to build a positive sense of self. Unemployment forces fathers to come up with new ways of being but the breadwinner ideology leaves fathers with a limited spectrum of alternatives (Khunou 2006). Even when unemployed, fathers are still seen as providers. So the social construction of fathers as providers hinders them to do other parental tasks such as household work.

As a structural force interfering in the lives of human agents, the state and its social policy is an important contributor to the shaping and reshaping of social constructions of fatherhood (Khunou 2006). Around the time of the first democratic election in South Africa in 1994 large transformations in social policy were designed and implemented. Its focus moved from apartheid welfare to developmental social welfare. Part of this policy reform was the introduction of the Child Support Grant (CSG) (Lund 2008).

The Child Support Grant and fatherhood

Social policy has an influence on family life. Dominant images of fatherhood in a society are reflected in societal institutions. Typically, social policy entails intrinsic assumptions about gender roles and men and women are given different social rights (Orloff 1993). These differences generally support men to be breadwinners and females to be caregivers. Through this, welfare states tend to exclude fathers from the domestic domain and mothers from the public domain and therefore shape gender relations (Orloff 1993). In this way social policy may put pressure on men to be breadwinners instead of combining family life and work.

Gender policy in development cooperation focusses on women and children because in relation to men they are in general more vulnerable and disadvantaged (Chant and Gutmann 2000). However, recent trends suggest that vulnerability and marginalization among, mainly young and poor, men is growing. Compared to young women, young men start falling behind in rates of education attainment and job opportunities. Also, the idealization of the breadwinner role for men attached to the lack of job opportunities destabilizes their status and identities and may have influence on their weakening integration into family life, mainly as

partners and fathers. Recently, it is argued that men should be more incorporated in gender and development policy. This holistic approach is considered to improve gender equality as gender roles are socially constructed between men and women. Therefore, according to Chant and Gutmann (2000), men need to be allies in the progress.

This study focusses on social policy and men as it examines the effects of the CSG on fatherhood in Doornkop, South Africa. The CSG is a small amount of cash transferred to poor children under the age of 18 via their primary caregiver (Patel and Hochfeld 2011). The CSG is financed by the state, means-tested and (almost) unconditional. The CSG reaches over 10.1 million poor children (Patel and Hochfeld 2011), which is about 55 percent of all children living in South Africa. Transferring the grant to the primary caregiver accommodates varied patterns of caregiving and fluidity of households observed in South Africa (Neves et al. 2009). The CSG was designed with the aim to be gender-neutral (Patel and Hochfeld 2011), that is, to break the pattern of social policy reinforcing gender roles, as mentioned above. The objective was to put principal emphasis on the child's needs. Caregivers are mostly mothers (87 percent) and rarely fathers (0,02 percent) (Lund 2008). Patel and Hochfeld (2011) point out that the dominant expectation that women should be primary caregivers has resulted in a feminization of the CSG, which makes it unsure if fathers are targeted by it. Moreover, the CSG was not designed to alter gender relations but since primary caregivers are mostly mothers, it might enforce gender inequality with respect to parenting. Mothers may be encouraged to be caregivers and fathers may be further excluded from the domestic domain. The effects of the CSG on fatherhood may be different for fathers receiving it or fathers who are involved in a household that receives the benefit. For these men the CSG might provide new social rights to practice fatherhood as they receive more resources to do so. The perceptions of fathers involved in households that receive a CSG will be analyzed to give insight in the way the CSG affects the practice of fatherhood according to men.

2.3 Fatherhood and capabilities

The literature analysis above indicates that the practice of fatherhood in South Africa is limited by several constraints. In order to analyze fatherhood in South Africa and how it is affected by social policy in this complex and multilayered society the capabilities approach of Sen is used. Continuities and changes are present in the institutionalization of the family in South Africa. Path dependencies enforce continuity in the conducts by which family life is

institutionalized in South Africa. Change occurs if people deviate from a path by acting alternatively. Possibilities for fathers to act otherwise are studied using the capabilities approach in order to create better understanding about the opportunities and limitations related to the social rights men have to practice fatherhood in South Africa.

Sen's capabilities approach is not a theory but a general framework. It is an evaluation space to assess the quality of life and individual's opportunities to pursue it (Robeyns 2003). Sen (1993: 30) argues that one's social situation can be evaluated in terms of "a person's ability to do valuable acts or reach valuable states of being". A key concept in the capabilities approach is 'functionings'. These are parts of a person's social situation: achieved 'doing and being' in his or her life (Sen 1993). Examples are "taking part in the community, being sheltered, relating to other people, working in the labor market, caring for others, and being healthy" (Robeyns 2003). 'Capability' of a person is a combination of functionings that can possibly be achieved (Sen 1993). From that combination a person chooses a set of doings and beings according to the life one wants to lead. The practice of fatherhood is for many a valued functioning. Sen (1993: 31) argues that the quality of life of someone can be assessed by analyzing one's capability to achieve valuable functionings. In this study the practice of fatherhood is the evaluation space in which valued beings and doings regarding fatherhood and the capability of fathers to achieve them are analyzed. The capability of a man to practice fatherhood reflects the freedom he has to lead the life he wants to live. This capability is influenced by different factors, such as individual characteristics and social institutionalizations (Sen 1993: 33). Here will be elaborated on factors that might influence the capability of men to practice fatherhood in South Africa. First tendencies that increase the opportunities of fathers to practice fatherhood and second tendencies that form barriers for fathers will be discussed. In exploring both mechanisms the CSG is a key point of interest.

A first facilitating factor is having access to financial recourses. Being employed or having job opportunities can encourage fathers to practice fatherhood. Another facilitating feature reflects men's own early family experiences. Positive experiences with one's own father may stimulate paternal motivations, involvements and influences. Thirdly, the CSG might facilitate the practice of fatherhood. Social policies can promote equality of capabilities so that people have more freedom to perform valuable beings and doings. The CSG entitles parents with new social rights. The financial recourses provided by it may encourage fathers to spend more time with their children as it is less needed to work or search for work. In concrete terms this

might mean that men can take two jobs instead of three or that men can bring their family over to live with him. The increased recourses provided by the CSG may help children to go to school, be properly fed and nurtured. This may give fathers confidence that they can succeed as parent. So the CSG may give fathers new opportunities to practice fatherhood but this takes place within a sphere of institutionalized constraints.

As mentioned in previous paragraphs, research shows that poverty, unemployment, limited or negative early family experiences, the migration labor market and gender norms and expectations place constraints on fathers in their fatherhood. Poverty and unemployment may cause fathers to be excluded or to voluntarily exclude themselves from their families because they cannot conform to the masculine provider role (Redpath et al. 2008). Limited or negative early family experiences, partly as an apartheid legacy, may cause fathers to develop disinterest in the practice of fatherhood (Marsiglio et al. 2008). The migration labor market, an apartheid legacy, may cause fathers to be physically distant from their children and therefore hinders the practice of fatherhood in some respects (Madhavan et al. 2008). Gender norms and expectations may put too much pressure on fathers which causes men to flee fatherhood (Datta 2007). Apart from the possible facilitating effects of the CSG, it may also have constraining effects. Fathers may also be further excluded from the domestic domain as mothers are mostly the primary caregivers. When mothers receive the CSG, father's insecure income gets challenged by a steady cash transfer given to their partners. Consequently, this empowerment of mothers can make them dismiss their partners as father's providing task is insufficient and not needed anymore. Also, fathers might exclude themselves because the CSG undermines his responsibility, what makes their presence unnecessary.

For the CSG to have an effect on fathers they have to be able to convert their increased social rights in capabilities to practice fatherhood. Various barriers, also those outlined above, might hinder potential effects of the CSG on the capabilities of fathers. The aim of the study is to capture aspirations of men to practice fatherhood together with the present obstacles to do so. Both mechanisms through which the CSG facilitates and constrains the practice of fatherhood are analyzed. These tendencies are shaped by both structural forces and individual resources.

2.4 A conceptual model

Figure 1 summarizes the theoretical concepts that are outlined above and connects them. The figure is an evaluation space in which the capabilities of fathers to practice fatherhood are studied. The CSG facilitates primary caregivers with new social rights. In two potential ways may the CSG encourage fathers to practice fatherhood: it may facilitate work- family reconciliation and it may stimulate confidence among fathers to successfully perform fatherly roles. Other factors that might facilitate the practice of fatherhood are access to financial means and positive early family experiences. Identified factors that might constrain fatherhood are: poverty, unemployment, limited or negative early family experiences, the migration labor market, gender norms and expectations and the CSG. So the CSG might also hinder the practice of fatherhood. As fathers might have fewer opportunities to exercise their social rights, the CSG can exclude fathers further from the domestic domain. The income from the CSG in a household received by mothers can make fathers as providers less needed and therefore they might be excluded from the household by themselves or their partners. Both facilitating and constraining factors for the practice of fatherhood (understood as paternal motivation, types of paternal involvement and paternal influence) are studied.

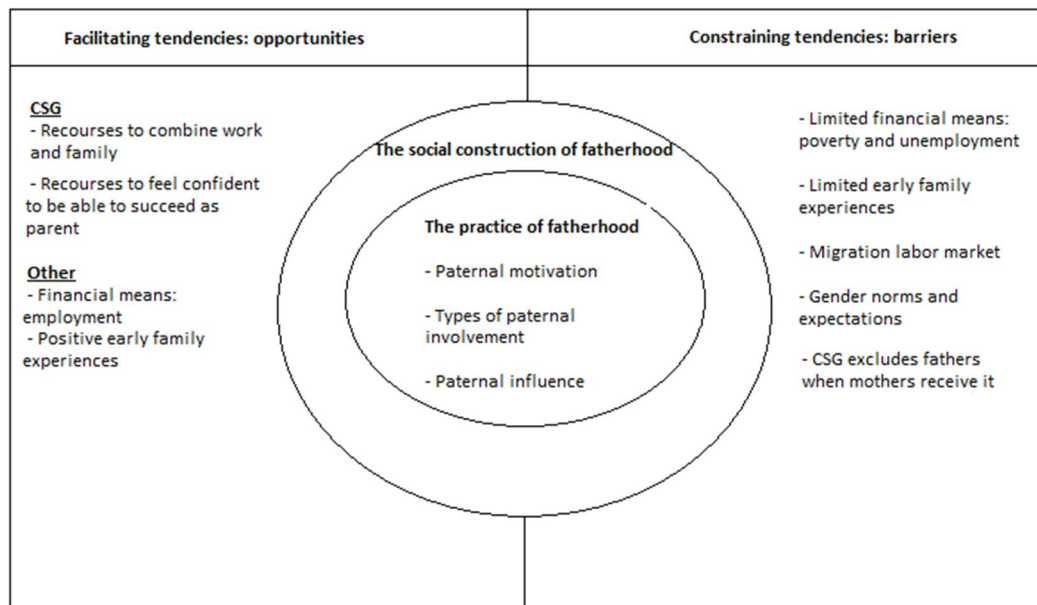


Figure 1

3. Research questions

The following questions are central in this research in order to get insight into the practice of fatherhood in Doornkop, Soweto, and how the CSG relates to it. The answers to these questions will show if and how the CSG influences fathers to practice fatherhood roles positively. Besides, they provide an understanding of the opportunities and limitations of men to practice fatherhood and how the CSG affects these capabilities.

Main question:

In the view of fathers, how does the presence of the Child Support Grant (CSG) in their household facilitate or constrain them to practice fatherhood roles positively?

Sub questions:

- In the view of fathers, does the CSG facilitate or constrain paternal motivation and if yes how?
- In the view of fathers, does the CSG facilitate or constrain patterns of paternal involvement and if yes how?
- In the view of fathers, does the CSG facilitate or constrain paternal influence and if yes how?
- What are men's capabilities to practice fatherhood, in this context?

4. Research methods

The research questions are answered using a qualitative approach. Qualitative research is chosen because this method has the potential to gain meaningful understanding of the way in which fathers perceive the CSG and how it affects their practice of fatherhood. Through qualitative research one can grasp mechanisms that influence the capabilities of fathers and the perceived opportunities of fathers to convert the CSG into capabilities to practice fatherhood. In this chapter the key concepts and methodology of the research are defined.

Operationalization

To provide insight in both the facilitating and constraining tendencies that affect the practice of fatherhood and especially how the CSG affects fatherhood, the used concepts in this research are defined and operationalized.

The practice of fatherhood: The practice of fatherhood is defined as “men’s positive, wide-ranging, and active participation in their children’s lives”. The practice of fatherhood contains three dimensions: paternal motivation, paternal involvement and paternal influence. Paternal motivation is defined as reasons why men would want to participate in their children’s lives. Types of paternal involvement are engagement, accessibility, responsibility and cognitive representations of involvement. Features of paternal influence are nurturance and provision of care, moral and ethical guidance, emotional, practical, and psychosocial support of partners and economic provision. The practice of fatherhood is regarded as a valued functioning (see functionings below).

Fatherhood: The social role that men undertake when they are being involved in the upbringing and development of their children. Fatherhood is a social construct shaped by a range of social dimensions.

Functionings: Functionings are activities and achievements that improve one’s quality of life. In this research emphasis is on functionings related to the practice of fatherhood. Accordingly functionings reflect beings and doings regarding fatherhood.

Capability: Capability is a combination of functionings that a person can possibly achieve. In this research it reflects the freedom of a father to choose the life he has reason to value. The capability of fathers to practice fatherhood is affected by both facilitating and constraining tendencies. The Child Support Grant is seen as a tendency that might either facilitate or constrain the capability of fathers to practice fatherhood.

The research site

The research site of this study is Doornkop, Soweto, in Johannesburg. Soweto was created during the apartheid to implement racial separation and its population is still predominantly black, speaking a diversity of languages. In Doornkop households live both in formal brick houses and in informal shacks. There are basic services (electricity and pipe water), social services (primary schools, a primary health clinic and NGO's) and small (formal and informal) businesses. Doornkop is one of the most deprived areas in Johannesburg. In this area of 24,225 inhabitants about 80 percent of the households with children 15 years and younger receive a CSG, which is a very high uptake compared to other areas (Patel et al. 2012; Patel and Hochfeld 2011).

The research site Doornkop was chosen because previous research at the CSG has been conducted there. A quantitative study among female beneficiaries was done by the Centre for Social Development in Africa (CSDA) at the University of Johannesburg, aimed to assess the gendered impact of the CSG (Patel et al. 2012). This was a first large-scale attempt to map the dynamics and effects of the CSG. The current research is a follow-up study. The available data gave direction to the research topic and the CSDA and their network in Doornkop provided access to the research site. The qualitative approach taken in this research will enhance knowledge about the impact of the CSG.

Participants and data collection

To get insight in the perceptions of fathers 15 interviews and 1 focus group discussion were conducted. There were two criteria set for the selection of participants. First, respondents should be involved in a household that receives a CSG. They can be either co-resident or living (periodically) apart from that household. Second, respondents should be regarded as father figures for the children in that household who are getting a CSG. Consequently, the

participants in this study are fathers who are related to households that receive the CSG and are involved with children the benefit is aimed for. The set criteria are rather flexible and that generated a diverse group of fathers, related to the CSG in different ways.

Recruitment of participants was initiated through the nongovernmental organization (NGO) “Humana: People to People”. This NGO is a well-known organization in Doornkop with large networks in the community. The project reaches 12,000 families in Doornkop (humana.org). The researcher did voluntary work at “Humana: People to People” what enhanced understanding of the community, familiarized locals with the researcher and provided contact with potential participants. Participants were selected through the so called “snowball method” in which participants were reached through networks of other participants and the network of social workers. Participants were also approached on the streets.

In total, 18 fathers participated of which 15 in individual interviews and 5 in a focus group discussion (FGD). In the FGD 2 fathers from earlier individual interviews and 3 ‘new’ respondents participated because it appeared very difficult to get enough fathers from the same group (either from the earlier interviews or by recruitment of ‘new’ participants) at the same time at the same place. Therefore it was decided to do what is second best; recruit as many fathers that meet the selection criteria (described above) to attend the discussion. This could have brought a bias to the FGD as some previously talked about the research topics with the researcher. Participant’s age ranged from 26 to 73 years old, with an average age of 40 years old and a median of 35 years old. 6 respondents are non-biological fathers (of which 3 grandfathers) and 9 are biological fathers. 10 of the respondents live with partners, 3 are single and 2 widower. 14 respondents are unemployed (3 disabled) of which 12 have irregular informal jobs and 1 has formal employment. The average number of children is 3.3 and 1.8 is the average number of CSG’s for their children. 2 fathers receive the CSG directly, 2 fathers receive the CSG indirectly through a relative and in 11 cases the mother collects the CSG. One respondent does not meet the criteria set for the selection of participants because the CSG of his son has recently been cut off. However, his case seemed interesting and therefore he was also taken for an individual interview.

In the first stage of data collection an exploratory interview was held with the staff of “Humana: People to People”. In this stage the researcher was made sensitive to ideas about the practice of fatherhood that prevail in Doornkop. The social workers at this NGO are considered to know a lot about the relevant social processes and issues in the community. In

the second stage of the data collection individual interviews with 15 fathers were conducted. The interviews were semi-structured; some questions and topics related to the theory were selected beforehand while space was left for unforeseen topics. The interviews revealed personal experiences and thoughts on the key concepts of this research. The interviewer led the conversations with a focus based on several subjects; how do respondents refer to their practice of fatherhood (paternal motivation, paternal involvements and paternal influence), how do they view the CSG (in general and in relation to themselves as fathers) and what do they perceive as opportunities and limitations for their practice of fatherhood and to lay claim to the CSG in paternal roles (see appendix for the interview schedule). Interviews were held both at the NGO and in respondent's homes. During all interviews a black male interpreter attended. The interpreter was trained by the researcher and the quality of the translations was checked afterwards. In the third stage of the data collection one focus group discussion was conducted. Focus group discussions shed light on dominant perceptions and social norms of fathers in Doornkop about fatherhood and the CSG. Vignettes were used to activate the discussion (Finch 1987). Vignettes are stories about hypothetical characters in certain circumstances. They enclose three parts of a story, every one of them taking the story a bit further. The parts were discussed separately and the fathers were asked about what they think of the story, the characters in it and what is happening. The vignettes used in the current research contain stories about fictive fathers living in Doornkop. Themes in the stories were positive and negative paternal roles, interaction of fathers with mothers and other relatives, hardships among fathers, father's association with the CSG and positive and negative effects of the CSG on fathers (see appendix). The FGD was conducted at the NGO and led by a black male interpreter who was trained beforehand.

Data analysis

The interviews and the focus group discussion were recorded and transcribed. The data is analyzed with software for qualitative data analysis called Nvivo. First, fragments in the transcripts were provided with open codes. Open codes are labels to identify text fragments which are relevant for answering the research question. Effort was put into covering all relevant aspects of a text fragment. This phase continued until all meaningful fragments were coded and produced a wide range of codes. Second, the list of codes formed have been further interpreted and reduced to main and subthemes using the theoretical framework. Similar codes were brought together under one label and themes were structured, with special

attention given to various text fragments that referred to the CSG. Third, relations between labels and differences between subgroups within the respondents were profoundly analyzed. In the analysis constant reflection on how the CSG affects different dimensions of the practice of fatherhood and what the perceived opportunities of fathers are to lay claim to the policy, gave direction to the structuring and integration of the data.

Ethics and limitations

Participants were informed beforehand about the content of the interviews and focus group discussion. Participants gave approval of participation and the recording of interviews and the focus group discussion through signing an informed consent form. Reciprocity was practiced towards those who contributed to the data collection. The participants received 20 rand in airtime and the interpreter was paid appropriately. The researcher thanked the social workers of “Humana: People to People” through a gift that will benefit the NGO.

The research methods encompass some limitations that need further reflection. First, conducting the field work on weekdays excluded those with regular jobs away from home. This might bias the research population. Nevertheless, the high unemployment rate of almost 50 percent in Doornkop makes this limitation less severe (joburgnews.co.za/stats/region6.stm). Second, the differences between the researcher and the participants, such as age, culture and sex, might have affected the data. In anticipation of this bias a black male interpreter was employed during the interviews and focus group discussion. Third, in some cases the interpreter has brought bias to the data as he formulated questions in a leading manner. These fragments are detected and have been removed from the data.

5. Relevance

Social relevance

Men are a missing factor in gender and development policy (Chant and Gutmann 2000). As fathers are largely (regarded as) absent and irresponsible, it is important to learn more about the lives and struggles of fathers in poor communities. Increased understanding of fatherhood in South Africa may alter marginalization of men and may be a first step in addressing issues like gender inequality, the effects of HIV/AIDS epidemic and children's well-being. There is a lot of debate on how policies can affect the practice of fatherhood. This study will highlight the perceptions of fathers concerning the influence of the CSG on the practice of fatherhood. This knowledge can be used to find ways to include men in gender and development policy.

Scientific relevance

This study will provide new insights in the lives of fathers and how social policy affects the practice of fatherhood. The inclusion of fatherhood in research on the CSG and gender dynamics is needed to gain comprehensive knowledge of the social effects triggered by the CSG. Scientific relevance can also be found in the adopted approach to study fatherhood and social policy. As the practice of fatherhood in South Africa faces several constraints, research on it demands an approach that acknowledges father's potential and opportunities to achieve in the practice of fatherhood. The capabilities approach shifts the analysis from looking at what fathers do towards what they want and possibly can achieve. This makes analysis in social policy research dynamic because it puts emphasis on the ways in which social benefits relate to people.

Relevance for interdisciplinary social sciences

The practice of fatherhood is embedded in the social construction of men as fathers and this is why it needs to be studied adopting an interdisciplinary approach. The practice of fatherhood is considered to be shaped inside a domain in which both structural constraints and individual resources are at play. Such analysis calls for a holistic approach as it moves between the macro, meso and micro level. It touches upon the different social disciplines and insights from

social psychology, anthropology, sociology and pedagogy will enhance understanding about how the CSG affects the practice of fatherhood.

6. Results

In the following section the empirical findings of the research on poor fathers and the CSG will be presented. For the three dimensions of the practice of fatherhood distinguished earlier; paternal motivation, paternal involvements and paternal influence, it will be discussed whether the CSG has facilitating or constraining effects on them. Then, the discussion will focus on the capabilities of men to practice fatherhood in Doornkop, Soweto, and how the CSG relates to them. But before presenting these results, a distinction between respondents will be made and illustrated. The categorization of respondents into subgroups seems critical for understanding the findings in the current research.

6.1 Three types of associations between fathers and the CSG

The relationship between fathers and the CSG appears ambiguous. The fact that it is uncommon for fathers to be primary caregivers and receive the CSG (Lund 2008) makes its impact on fathers diverse. On the one hand, it produces a weak affiliation with the CSG as most fathers do not receive it. On the other hand, there are fathers who do receive it and for them the connection with CSG is more profound. However, in this category it is neither self-evident that the father should be primary caregiver nor receive the CSG. Before getting into more detail a distinction between three groups of fathers needs to be made. The difference between fathers lies in their relationship with the CSG; there are fathers who are direct recipients, indirect recipients and non-recipients. The three subgroups are further described below.

The non-recipients

The fathers who do not receive a CSG are the largest group in this research. In general, they are biological fathers living together with their children and the children's mother. The CSG of their children is collected and spent by the mother. The fathers in this category are largely in a relationship with the mother of their children. In some cases the father does not live with his child(ren) and partner. The reason for this is mainly cultural: the father has not paid

ilobolo (bride price) yet and therefore is not allowed to live with his family. The children of non-recipients are young (often under 10 years old) and these fathers have an average number of 2.3 children. They typically consider themselves as breadwinners and not as caregivers, even though they are often unemployed.

The direct recipients

Fathers who directly receive the CSG are scarce in this research (and in reality). This category refers to fathers whom collect and spend the CSG. They are their children's only parent and live together with them. Baruti¹ points out; 'I'm not only the father for my brothers but also the mother'. In both cases these direct recipients of the CSG are not biological fathers of their children. One of them is widower and lives with two teenage grandchildren and his son (23 years old) and the other is single and lives with his two teenage brothers. Their position as a direct recipient of the CSG is due to some kind of necessity. First there is the case of Harold²; he applied for it because his wife passed away. Before her death, his wife was receiving the grants for his two grandchildren and there was no need for him to do it. When she passed away he felt responsible to take over and apply for the CSG's. The second case concerns Baruti; he applied for the CSG because both his parents deceased and he became responsible for his two underage brothers. So in both cases it is not self-evident that they should be the ones receiving it, but they do receive it, because there is no one else (above all no women) to receive it. They are both unemployed, with insecure temporarily jobs and therefore can use the steady income that the CSG provides.

Also, the direct recipients of the CSG have progressive ideas on gender roles and act on these beliefs. They are responsible for the care of their children and do the washing, cooking, cleaning and shopping. Baruti indicates that he is both father and mother and Harold states:

Harold I'm not doing things according to what others think: I'm washing the blankets, the window etc.

(59 year old father of 4 children and 2 grandchildren, 2 direct CSG's)

¹ 37 year old father of 2 children, 2 direct CSG's

² 59 year old father of 4 children and 2 grandchildren, 2 direct CSG's

The indirect recipients

Indirect recipients are fathers who receive the CSG through a third party. In the current research this go-between is the mother or aunt of the children they look after. The CSG is collected by these relatives and then sent to the fathers as the children stay with them. The mothers and biological fathers (if not deceased) live at a distance, separate from the children, and the respondents keep and care for the children. The indirect recipients in the current research are biological and non-biological fathers (uncle and/or stepfather). They are both single and live with 3 children. First there is Abraham³, he takes care over his sister's children because she moved to downtown Johannesburg for work. Abraham receives the CSG indirectly because the mother wants part of the money and she thinks that Abraham would misuse it if he would collect it himself. He indicates that it would cause conflict between him and the mother if he became the direct recipient. Matshidiso⁴ explains that due to family issues he became responsible for his non-biological children. He takes care of his biological daughter, a daughter of his deceased wife and a son of his brother. Matshidiso is not trying to become a direct recipient for various reasons. First, because he thinks that it will take too much time and second, because he is not sure if officials would approve his request because he is a man:

Matshidiso She [the aunt of one of my children] sends that money [to me] from Eastern Cape because I don't want to go and queue and change things. That's why I leave it like that. It'll waste my time. [] With that government things it cannot go alright. Maybe we'll lose it. So I said no we'll leave it like that and when you got the time send it to me. [] You can't get a grant when you are a man. It's supposed to be mothers who claim that money. They say so. I have that knowledge. So that is why I left it like that.

(52 year old father of three teenagers, 2 indirect CSG's)

Third, the current arrangement concerning the CSG with family members complicates it further. It seems that interests of family members also inhibit him from claiming the CSG directly.

So, the distant presence of family members appears the main reason for indirect recipients not to change the CSG on their names. However, the indirect transfer to these fathers makes the

³ 46 year old father of 3 children, 2 indirect CSG's

⁴ 52 year old father of 3 teenagers, 2 indirect CSG's

CGS a more insecure benefit for them because it is uncertain if, and when the money is sent and sometimes the intercessors also need a share of it.

The distinction between respondents found and described in this paragraph is essential for understanding the rest of the research findings. In the following, the categories will be referred to as non-recipients, direct recipients and indirect recipients.

6.2 *The practice of fatherhood and the CSG*

This paragraph will provide answers to the following three sub questions: ‘*in the view of fathers, does the CSG facilitate or constrain paternal motivation and if yes how?*’, ‘*in the view of fathers, does the CSG facilitate or constrain patterns of paternal involvement and if yes how?*’ and ‘*in the view of fathers, does the CSG facilitate or constrain paternal influence and if yes how?*’. These results will improve understanding on the type of impact the CSG has on poor fathers and how the effects differ between categories of fathers, depending on their association with the CSG.

6.2.1 *Paternal motivation and the CSG*

Previous research shows that various factors can have encouraging effects on fathers to take part in their children’s lives (Marsiglio et al. 2008). Here it was researched if paternal motivation is facilitated or constrained by receiving CSG(’s) in a household. In general, however, its effect on paternal motivation appears weak. The CSG is not regarded as a direct reason or stimulant for respondent’s involvement with their children. As the following fragment shows, this father does not refer to the CSG as a significant encouragement for his involvement with his children:

Baruti It’s my responsibility to take care of everything, even when the Child Support Grant was not there.

Interviewer But does it [the CSG] help or encourage you to take the responsibility?

[]

Baruti No I cannot just rely on the Child Support Grant. There must be more means so life can go on. Not because only of this Child Support Grant. There must be something more.

(37 year old father of two teenagers, 2 direct CSG’s)

Although this respondent does not refer to the CSG as being a reason for his paternal involvement, it does seem to facilitate his present paternal motivation:

Interviewer Is there anything that makes you proud as a father?

Baruti With some of the piece jobs that I do and then this money from the Child Grant... I can manage to buy some uniforms or even that they can take some treats for school. I try to give them some more. That makes me proud.

Interviewer So the Child Support Grant helps you in being proud as a father?

Baruti [Yah] because maybe there's one child... maybe eh the shoes are not right or maybe there's no polish for the shoes... I can go to get a polish so these young ones can polish their shoes and look like other children.

(37 year old father of two teenagers, 2 direct CSG's)

The fragment above shows that receiving CSG's can make a father proud because it assists him in buying important goods for his children. While it does not show whether the CSG is an encouragement for this father's involvement with his children, it does give him the feeling he can cope. Here, the CSG appears to have facilitating effects on paternal motivation through enhancing the self-esteem of the fathers. This is mainly found among the fathers who directly receive the CSG. For non-recipients and indirect recipients the CSG does not seem to have much effect on paternal motivation. The CSG appears not to alter their reasons to be involved with their children or facilitate paternal motivation.

Paternal motivation seems to be drawn from other sources. A noticeable finding is that fathers with own absent fathers in their childhood draw paternal motivation from this experience:

Dumisani He [his father] wasn't living with me and that affected me so much. I know if my father was here... some of the things I experienced I wouldn't have because I could go to him and ask advice from him: "Dad if something happened like this, what should I do?" You see? But he wasn't there for me. That's why I'm trying to change; I'm trying to be a better father. That's why I wanna be a better father. It encourages me.

(26 year old father of 2 children, 1 CSG, collected by the mother)

It appears that respondents try to correct their father's mistakes. By 'trying even harder' they want to make up for their own father's failing. The eagerness to take part in their children's lives seems to be triggered by experienced difficulties and shortcomings while growing up without a father. Hence it seems that growing up in a failed fathering environment can

encourage men to be a good father because they know how difficult it is to grow up without a father. It is not clear if and how the CSG affects this paternal motivation.

In short, from the perspective of fathers, the CSG is not regarded as a source of paternal motivation. However, for direct recipients of the CSG it seems to facilitate their paternal motivation by lifting their self-esteem. Paternal motivation of non-recipients and indirect recipients appears unaffected by the benefit. It remains uncertain how the CSG affects other sources of paternal motivation.

6.2.2 *Paternal involvement and the CSG*

A second dimension of the practice of fatherhood is the type of paternal involvement. Aspects of it are engagement, accessibility, responsibility and cognitive representations (Marsiglio et al. 2008).

Engagement

Common ways in which respondents interact with their children are; helping with homework, playing, talking, going to the playground, playing soccer and going to the shops. The CSG does not seem to have much influence on the direct interactions between fathers and children. It appears that fatherly activities are not much affected by this increase of funds in the family. Matshidiso indicates the CSG did not change anything in his life. Direct interaction with his children remains limited because he is ‘busy working and supporting his children’:

Matshidiso I hear from them in school we do this. They say we go and sing somewhere. I say go but me I have no chance. I have no chance to stay at home. I have to try and get food for tomorrow. That’s why I don’t have a chance to do that. I’m always busy.

(52 year old father of 3 teenagers, 2 indirect CSG’s)

However, in some cases and especially among direct recipients, the CSG does seem to have facilitating effect on fatherly contact that requires financial resources. It gives Sizwe the opportunity to take his children out on occasion and buy them a treat:

Sizwe When we get the money [referring to both the CSG and the disability grant] we sometimes go to town. To the mall and buy them [the children] KFC. Just to make them happy.

(35 year old father of 3 children, 3 CSG's, collected by the mother)

Going to a fast food restaurant is regarded as a special trip and a status symbol. The CSG facilitates this festive activity that Sizwe enjoys with his children.

Accessibility

According to fathers there are lots of opportunities for their children to interact with them. Most of the respondents seem to have daily contact with their children and indicate that they want to 'be approachable', 'be there, be home' and 'solve problems'. It does not look as if the CSG has much impact on the accessibility of fathers though. Their accessibility is limited by employment, job searching and for some because they do not live with their children. In the view of fathers, the CSG is not something that makes working or the search for work less urgent and it seems therefore not to affect accessibility much. Fathers who do not live together with their children try to visit them or call them when they have phone credit but this does not appear to be influenced by the CSG. Here, there is no difference found between direct recipients, indirect recipients and non-recipients.

Responsibility

Taking final responsibility over children's well-being seems facilitated by the CSG. Respondents indicate that it assists in buying food and clothes, paying school fees and affording transport to school; and this has a positive influence on their perceived ability to feed, dress and educate their children. The respondent quoted below shows that it improves his capacity to assure that his children have something to eat:

Harold [Life] changed [since the CSG] because I don't have worries. I've got food. You see? I've got something to feed this kids. I don't have to go to someone outside and go and ask. [] I can solve my problems alone.

(59 year old father of two teenagers, 2 direct CSG's)

The increased opportunities to take responsibility are better noticed when respondents are direct recipients. Non-recipients and indirect recipients link the increased well-being of their children less to their own agency. Although it improved their children's nutrition, school attendance and clothing, it is not associated with *their* ability to take final responsibility. So the potential effect of the CSG on their perceived ability to take responsibility is less observed. Moreover, they seem to experience high levels of anxiety about perceived inabilities to assure children's well-being.

Cognitive representations

Frequently, concerns are raised by respondents about the well-being of their children. Fathers worry about their children's nutrition, education and future. In the following quote a respondent expresses his constant worry for food:

George Food is always a problem. I worry about food. If they have food there is no worry. If I have something, mieliepap, sugar, then it is okay.

(73 year old father of 7 children and 4 grandchildren, 1 CSG for his grandchild, collected by his wife)

The CSG appears to diminish anxiety over children's well-being. As it provides nutrition and education, respondents indicate that they experience less financial worries. This facilitating effect on cognitive representation is especially noticed among fathers who directly receive the CSG, but can also be found among the other categories.

Worries of respondents are often intertwined with perceived feelings of personal failure: not being able to provide, anxiety to die at an early stage or not being able to invest in their children's future.

Mozes I worry about that maybe if I had the small money, I could start a small business... invest money for my children. [] So that they can survive in the future. That's all I'm worrying about.

(29 year old father of two children, 2 CSG's, collected by the mother)

This type of concern does not seem diminished by the CSG and sometimes it even amplifies such worries. They feel ashamed about depending on the CSG and this triggers a negative

sense of self. They want to be the cause of improvements of their children's well-being, and when improvement is caused by governmental interference it makes respondents feel like they are failing as a provider. This is mainly found among non-recipients and indirect recipients. Later it will be discussed in more detail.

In conclusion, the effects of the CSG on paternal involvements appear indefinite. Facilitating effects merely influence paternal involvements that involve financial resources. First, fathers find themselves more able to involve in engagements that require money. Second, as the CSG helps to provide basic needs, it seems to enhance their ability to take final responsibility over their children's well-being. Third, it eases financial worries about meeting children's needs. On several other aspects of paternal involvement the benefit appears to have no effect. The found effects of the CSG are mainly acknowledged by direct recipients. Generally, paternal involvements of non-recipients and indirect recipients are less affected by the CSG. Regarding anxiety to fail as fathers; the CSG seems to increase such worries among non-recipients and indirect recipients.

6.2.3 Paternal influence and the CSG

A third indicator of the practice of fatherhood is paternal influence. Marsiglio et al. (2008) distinguished four features: nurturance and provision of care, moral and ethical guidance, emotional, practical and psychosocial support of partners and economic provision.

Nurturance and provision of care

For fathers quoted below the CSG seems to have a positive influence on their abilities to do care work. These fathers are direct or indirect recipients and are single or widower.

Harold [Now] I've got something to feed these kids.

(59 year old father of two teenagers, 2 direct CSG's)

Baruti When I get the money from the grant I buy them something like food and soap and everything. So I can wash their clothes.

(37 year old father of two teenagers, 2 direct CSG's)

Matshidiso [I use the CSG] for caring [] when they go to school I give them every day 5 Rand, 5 Rand. So that they can buy fruit; there is a fruits at school. Or I buy food for in the house [] If I have no job that month.

(52 year old father of three teenagers, 2 indirect CSG's)

However, the universal detachment from care work by men is also evident in the data. This is especially true for fathers who are non-recipients of the CSG. The following quote shows that respondents distance themselves from the CSG because they do not associate themselves with caregiving:

Mozes It's not a good thing for fathers to receive that grant money. At least for mothers because the mothers are those who look after the children. Fathers are always going outside and look for piece jobs or what. So when the kids start to cough, the mother immediately reacts so that she can see whether the children got cough or what, or is sick or what.

(29 year old father of two children, 2 CSG's, collected by the mother)

The quote above shows the prevalence of traditional gender roles in Doornkop; women are associated with the domestic domain as caregivers and men with the public domain as breadwinners. As the CSG is ought to be used for the well-being of children and in the household, this father detaches himself from it because this is not the domain in which he plays a role. Consequently, the CSG seems to underline father's detachment from care work. Mozes's ideas form part of a general trend in which non-recipients state that the CSG is not for them but for children and mothers. Later the influence of prevailing gender relations on the relation of fathers with the CSG will be discussed in more detail.

So, on the one hand the CSG facilitates nurturance and provision of care among direct and indirect recipients. At odds with conventional gender roles these fathers appear involved in care work. Although, being single is a likely condition for that. On the other hand, among non-recipients, the CSG underlines their detachment from care work and therefore it does not influence them in caregiving.

Moral and ethical guidance

Moral and ethical guidance is acknowledged by respondents as an important part of their fatherhood. 'Showing my children the way of living', 'being a role model', 'teaching what is

wrong and right’, ‘teaching how to respect others’ and ‘giving advice’ are some examples on how fathers want to influence their children. It appears a central feature of respondent’s perceived paternal influence. The CSG does not seem to affect or relate to it.

Emotional, practical and psycho-social support of partners

In general, emotional, practical and psycho-social support of partners does not seem facilitated or constrained by the CSG. In the current research, respondents with partners are all non-recipients. They appear less involved with the CSG as their partner receives and controls the CSG. In their view, it does not seem to change the support of and relationship with their partners. Generally respondents are satisfied with the way the mother uses the CSG and do not want to interfere with it:

Itembe I’m feeling well when [the CSG] is taking by the mother because the mother is doing the right thing with that money. It is not like that when she is collecting that money that when she comes back, she’s drunk. No. She is using it very well.

(34 year old father of 1 child and 1 teenager, 1 CSG, collected by the mother)

Respondents are skeptical when commenting on a vignette in the focus group discussion in which a mother is asking her partner to work less and spend more time with their three children because they started receiving CSG’s. They do not think the CSG can nor should change the way this father supports his family:

Lufuno [I don’t think the CSG is] enough for these kids. So I think if [the father] is man enough he shouldn’t agree to stay at home.

Dumisani He shouldn’t agree. What he must do is to try and squeeze sometimes and plan sometimes with the children.

(focus group discussion)

Sometimes the CSG appears a source of conflict within households. Mozes indicates he has arguments with his partner when he asks her for a share:

Mozes If I’m asking for something [money for transport] so I can make some means [look for a job] in Roodepoort or in Jo’burg, you see? [She] say you can borrow the money somewhere else at friends or somewhere. That’s whereby the clash starts. Because it’s a

difficulty because when I have some money I think about the children. When she has the money she refuses.

(29 year old father of two children, 2 CSG's, collected by the mother)

During the exploratory group interview with social workers in Doornkop this finding became apparent as well. They reported conflicts within households on the use of the CSG since it often is the steadiest source of income. The conflicts might stem from the general lack of authority fathers have over the CSG that triggers jealousy. When the CSG causes conflicts it constrains the support of partners. It might therefore be a reason for fathers to weaken the support they give to their partners. However, this is not widely acknowledged by respondents.

For others, the lack of involvement with the CSG is part of their current position in the family. Luzuko has little to say about it because he has not yet been able to pay *ilobolo* (bride price). As a result he cannot marry and have a traditional leading role within his family.

Luzuko I don't feel well about that the mother decides what to do with the money [of the CSG]. I want to be part of the decisions about what is happening with that money.

Interviewer And why are you not part of that?

Luzuko It is too difficult because according to my culture I have to be married to be in control.

Interviewer If you could have one wish what would you change? If you had the power.

Luzuko That if something needs to be done that it is done together. With me and my wife together. If there is something, some money, we have to sit down and discuss what to do with that money.

(35 year old father of 2 children, 1 CSG, collected by the mother)

Cultural practices that constrain his authority are regarded as an obstacle to take decisions (about the CSG) together with his partner. As they limit his possibilities to have something to say about the CSG, it cannot facilitate him to support his partner.

However, in general the CSG does not seem to facilitate or constrain the support of fathers given to their partners. There is a dominant understanding that the CSG should not change the supporting practices of fathers to their partners. This indicates that the CSG is not regarded as an entitlement for fathers among respondents with partners. Fathers with partners are mainly non-recipients.

Economic provision

The respondents have an ambivalent attitude towards the fourth feature of paternal influence; economic provision, and the CSG. On the one hand, the CSG assists fathers in role as provider. Respondents indicate that the CSG eases their financial worries and allows them to afford more for their children:

Ammon I don't worry my mind anymore. Sometimes I used to worry so much. But now you see because that grant is helping. Since that grant is there, I don't have to ask my mother for help. Things are a little bit easier. It's not like before. You see?

(33 year old father of 3 children, 2 CSG's, collected by the mother)

Dumisani For my side [the CSG] is helping. I can even pay that school fees. Because I wouldn't have afford it. [] If I paid my child's school fees, I had to cancel maybe something in all that. But because of that grant at least I can do some of the things on my one.

(26 year old father of 2 children, 1 CSG, collected by the mother)

On the other hand, the same respondents express sentiments of aversion and envy against the CSG:

Ammon I'm okay with [the CSG]. It's good for my children. But me I want to provide for my children even more. So that they can be alright in life. That is the thing I want.

[]

That grant is defining who is providing for my family. That's the thing I don't want. I'm jealous of my family. You see?

(33 year old father of 3 children, 2 CSG's, collected by the mother)

Dumisani [The CSG] doesn't make me feel good because I want my children to, like, to be, to have something that comes from me. Yah I want them to use my money. That I worked for it. That would make me proud.

(26 year old father of 2 children, 1 CSG, collected by the mother)

Even though the CSG facilitates the family income, respondents sit uneasy with it. They accept the assistance from the CSG because of financial hardship but it makes them feel like failures. 'Bringing food to the table' is by many regarded as the most important responsibility of a father. So this government aid is interfering with their main responsibility. The CSG

seems to affect them in their pride. If given the option, they would prefer to work and earn enough to cut off the CSG:

Mozes If ever I can do something on my own. If ever I can be strong to do something. So I have the power, so I can make money, you see? Then I wouldn't mind to stop this grant money.

(29 year old father of two children, 2 CSG's, collected by the mother)

For these respondents, it seems that the CSG is neither facilitating nor constraining their economic provision. The CSG is accepted and considered helpful during unemployment. Yet, they do not consider it as supporting *their* role as provider.

The trend described above is mainly found among non-recipients and indirect recipients. Direct recipients do seem facilitated in their breadwinner role by the CSG and feel more capable to provide. This difference can be explained by the fact that direct recipients have control over the money and the others less so.

In summary, apart from moral and ethical guidance, the CSG has various effects on the features of paternal influence. Primarily, direct recipients of the CSG appear facilitated in their paternal influence. It is found that it supports their involvement in care work and economic provision. Facilitating effects of the CSG on nurturance and the provision of care are also found among indirect recipients. Non-recipients seem less affected by the CSG in their paternal influence. They indicate that it cannot and should not change their support of partners and their economic provision. Also, the CSG does not affect their detachment from care work and might even reinforce it.

6.2.4 Conclusion: the practice of fatherhood and the CSG

The findings are complex and multilayered which makes it difficult to give clear-cut answers to the first three sub questions in this research. The ambiguous relationship between the practice of fatherhood and the CSG stems largely from the distinction between the respondents described in the first paragraph. In several respects the CSG facilitates direct recipients in their practice of fatherhood, whereas those effects remain largely undetected

among non-recipients and indirect recipients. Non-recipients do not perceive the CSG as very important for the practice of fatherhood. It is regarded as a positive contribution for their children but not for *their* own role in the family. In general, indirect recipients neither seem influenced by the CSG in their practice of fatherhood, yet it has a little more effect than on non-recipients.

So, the extent to which a father is in control of the money seems to be a condition for its effectiveness on the practice of fatherhood. Since direct and indirect recipients are all primary caregivers and single/widower they are considered for receiving the CSG. Fathers with partners are not likely to be primary caregivers and therefore no CSG recipients. Findings on the opportunities and barriers for fathers to make a claim on the CSG are outlined below.

6.3 The CSG and capabilities

This paragraph provides answers to the following sub question: '*what are men's capabilities to practice fatherhood, in this context?*'. It reifies the capabilities of men to practice fatherhood and how the CSG affects them. These results give insight into the opportunities related to the CSG for fathers to extend their capabilities, and on the other hand, what the barriers are.

6.3.1 Insight into opportunities

In South Africa fathers who directly receive the CSG are scarce (Lund 2008). Though small in number, the findings above show that direct recipients are facilitated the most, compared to non-recipients and indirect recipients, by the CSG in their practice of fatherhood. This indicates that direct recipients seem, unlike others, able to convert entitlements to the social benefit into capabilities to practice fatherhood. To get more insight into why the CSG enhances their capabilities to practice fatherhood, it is analyzed how the characteristics of direct recipients can explain the effects of the CSG.

First, some clarification is needed on the way in which directly receiving the CSG appears to enhance the opportunities of men to practice fatherhood. It is found that direct recipients use the benefit more than others in their practice of fatherhood. It facilitates their economic

provision, care work and responsibility, and it makes them worry less and it gives them self-esteem in their role as fathers. So they seem to face few barriers in utilizing it in their practice of fatherhood. Moreover, they do not refer to the positive effects of the CSG in a general way but associate them more with their own fatherhood practices. Statements like ‘the CSG makes *me* proud’, ‘with the CSG *I* can manage’ and ‘now *I*’ve got something to feed these kids’ illustrate this.

Reasons for the finding that the CSG enhances opportunities among direct recipients to practice fatherhood stem from their; association with the benefit, role as father and progressive assumptions about gender roles. In previous research it was shown that the CSG empowers female beneficiaries (Patel et al. 2012). Here it is found that it has also empowering effects on male beneficiaries. So, fathers having control of the money and being primary caregiver constitutes a condition for the policy to affect fatherhood positively. However, most fathers do not meet this condition, and when they do, it seems far from self-evident. In the current research the characteristics of direct recipients made it possible for them to apply for the CSG; not being closely surrounded by relatives and being the only parent for their children. Alternatively, if they were not the only caregivers or if there were other (female) relatives around, they would probably not be direct recipients. Furthermore, the progressive ideas on gender roles found among direct recipients can explain the facilitating impact of the CSG on them. Their open-mindedness about gender roles made them more willing to apply for the CSG and use it in their parenting.

For respondents who indirectly receive the CSG, it does not seem to expand their capabilities to practice fatherhood. This is generally because they do not have full authority over the money and the cash transfer is more uncertain; involvement of relatives appears to undermine respondents control over the CSG. The following section looks further into the obstacles for men to make a claim on the CSG in their practice of fatherhood.

6.3.2 Factors that produce weak capabilities

As shown above, mainly non-recipients and indirect recipients perceive the CSG as something that does not affect their fatherhood; they do not associate its effects with them personally. The following section explores barriers for men that are limiting their possibilities to utilize

the CSG in their practice of fatherhood. Consequently, insight is given into factors that weaken capabilities for fathers to develop their fatherhood.

Meeting gender norms: the struggle against unemployment

Lufuno As we have explained that if you are the father you have to make all the means that you put something, that you provide something to your family. So if you feel like you don't have something or there is nothing that you can provide for the, for your family... that means you don't have anything that you might say to your family.

(Focus group discussion)

Traditional gender norms and expectations, in which the mother is caregiver and the father breadwinner, remain widespread. The expectation that women should be primary caregivers has resulted in the feminization of the CSG (Patel and Hochfeld 2011). In this research it is found that gender norms and expectations form an important barrier for fathers to use the CSG in their practice of fatherhood. The grant is largely regarded as something for women and children and as the CSG has become 'policy for mothers', it makes fathers think they are not entitled to it:

Kabelo If you are man and want to go and apply for the grant. You start thinking twice. [] It's very rare that men apply for grants. So we start to think I won't be able to get it.

(focus group discussion)

Respondents appear to exclude themselves from it since they think the CSG is not for them:

Luthando [The CSG] is helping mothers children more [than fathers]. That money it is not for me because it needs to be used at home. You see? I work for myself... I mean for my family. I don't need a share of that grant because it is for them. Mothers and her children.

(35 year old father of 3 children, 3 CSG's, collected by the mother)

The CSG is associated with the domestic domain and most respondents explain that their central role in the household is 'being the breadwinner'. Because their role lies outside the domestic domain fathers distance themselves from the effects the benefit has on his children.

Gender norms and expectations put pressure on fathers to be successful providers for their families. Consequently, respondents struggle severely due to unemployment and the lack of job opportunities. Not being able to provide for the family triggers sentiments of embarrassment, anger and sadness. Most fathers look daily for (temporally) jobs, but mostly in vain:

Itembe I tell me wife that I'm going to look for a job and then I went there and when I'm there I find that there is no job. I come back empty handed. When I'm sit down it is not nice. I feel sad.

(34 year old father of 1 child and 1 teenager, 1 CSG, collected by the mother)

Job insecurity and unemployment place constraints on men's capabilities to practice fatherhood because it is difficult to achieve that one thing that is expected from them; bringing food to the table. Respondents indicate that they do not feel 'father enough' since they are not working. The following quotes illustrate this:

Ammon You see when the times go, when the day goes, at about 7 o clock in the evening. That's where the stress comes. What will my children eat? At that time maybe the rain is raining. I don't, I cannot work when the rain is raining in car wash. The cars are not coming when the rain is raining. You see when we come to lose days and you see that at the end of the month there's eeh... it's not here. The money is not there. I don't want my children to sleep without eating. You see? Now that thing is a difficult. Sometimes you'll think about killing yourself. Because when they are hungry they come to you. They don't go to their mother. They come to you. Then you don't have anything to give them. You see? That thing is so painful.

(33 year old father of 3 children, 2 CSG's, collected by the mother)

Dumisani I feel like I should do things for myself. I shouldn't be waiting for somebody to do it for me. You see? I feel like doing things for myself, standing up for myself. [] Am I not father enough to this child or what? You see? So that's a problem. A big problem.

[]

I'm angry you know. I have anger inside cause of these things we are talking about. They make me very angry inside. I feel... I cannot say helpless... but I feel like I'm useless. That's what I feel right now and that is what I don't want to feel in life.

(26 year old father of 2 children, 1 CSG, collected by the mother)

Respondents appear unable to meet what society dictates them to do and be. Unemployment undermines their capabilities to practice fatherhood as they cannot conform to the masculine provider role.

Respondents do plead for governmental support and indicate that they should receive assistance which enhances their opportunities to provide. In general, however, the CSG is not perceived as assistance in this struggle. Respondents state that 'it provides for their families instead of them'. Due to dictating gender norms this makes them regarded as being weak, by themselves and others. So the CSG seems to underline their inability to succeed in their breadwinner role. As the following quotes show, receiving CSG's stimulates negative self-images and feelings of failure:

Ammon I don't want to get that money because I feel like a loser. You see? I'm a father, I'm a man, I'm going there to fetch money. No no no. I don't see that's alright. [] [the CSG] don't give me self-esteem. It look as I'm a loser. You see? Like I'm a I'm a eh... loser.

(33 year old father of 3 children, 2 CSG's, collected by the mother)

William You end up being a man with no dignity. You're not respected by people cause of this money.

(59 year old father of 3 children and 1 grandchild, 1 CSG, collected by the mother/his daughter)

Consequently, gender norms make fathers less entitled to use the CSG. The need for fathers to meet prevailing gender norms, combined with their inability to do so, produce weak capabilities. Moreover, gender rules limit their opportunities to make a claim on the CSG and let it enhance their capability to practice fatherhood.

Perceived bias against men in society

Lufuno Women have all the power. More than the men actually. That's why they got the women's day. We men we don't even have a men's day.

(focus group discussion)

Due to large number of absent and abusive fathers in South Africa the dominant image on them has become negative (Morrel and Richter 2006). The stigmatization of fathers caused by destructive masculine behavior forms another barrier for respondents in this research. First, awareness of the prevailing stigmas and bias against men makes respondents think that they cannot apply for social assistance. It keeps them from searching support in their practice of fatherhood.

Stigmas and biases against men makes respondents encounter discrimination when they try to get support in their father role. The negative image of fathers in society appears to lead to prejudice among officials and this is noticed by respondents. They experience marginalization by institutes such as the police, government institutions and social organizations. The quote below shows how men get excluded from food aid programs while Matshidiso is the primary caregiver of his children.

Matshidiso There was this thing about getting food and I went because they were saying go there. If the government is saying they help people they don't succeed. I went there to try [but] they say no you are a man you can get a piece job. They said that to me. So I leave it like that.

(52 year old father of three teenagers, 2 indirect CSG's)

This bias against men in official institutes is also encountered by respondents in applying or wanting to apply for the CSG:

Interviewer Why does your son don't get the grant?

Dumisani It is a big problem because I got a problem with the mum. The mother stays in Durban. [] When I got the child she didn't give me anything; any birth certificate. Now the child does not have a birth certificate. [] So I cannot get any grant. [] I went and came at the social workers. They told me I couldn't make the birth certificate. Who could make it? The mother. Only because I'm a father. I even went to Roodepoort, they told me I can't do anything without the mother. I can't get a birth certificate without the mother. My child [is no] child without the mother.

(26 year old father of 2 children, 1 CSG, collected by the mother)

Dumisani is the primary caregiver of the child he is trying to get a birth certificate and a CSG for. The mother of this child does not live together with them; she lives in Durban. He indicates that it is not possible for him to get a birth certificate and apply for the CSG as father while the mother of the child is at a distance.

The quotes above show that the negative image of fathers in society has become a barrier which limits respondent's opportunities to use the CSG or other social assistance. An institutionalized bias against men seems to exclude fathers from support, which produces weak capabilities to practice fatherhood.

6.3.3 Conclusion: the CSG and capabilities

Where fathers are direct recipients of the CSG, it seems to increase their capabilities to practice fatherhood. However, it is also shown that being a direct recipient of the CSG as father is far from self-evident. In general, opportunities for fathers to make a claim on the CSG appear limited. Social, economic and institutional barriers keep fathers from making use of it in their father role. Found constrains that undermine the capability of men to practice fatherhood, such as unemployment, gender norms and stigmatization, makes it less likely for fathers to use to the CSG.

7. Conclusion and discussion

This research investigated the impact of the Child Support Grant (CSG) on fathers and their practice of fatherhood. It explored whether the CSG facilitates or constrains the practice of fatherhood, and what the capabilities of fathers are in this context. In this chapter the conclusions of the research are presented and discussed. From the conclusions, recommendations for policy and suggestions for further research are given.

The question central to this research is: *‘in the view of fathers, how does the presence of the Child Support Grant (CSG) in their household facilitate or constrain them to practice fatherhood roles positively?’*. To find the answer 15 individual interviews and 1 focus group discussion were conducted. Emphasis was put on three dimensions of the practice of fatherhood, which are; paternal motivation, paternal involvements and paternal influence. Moreover, the opportunities and barriers posed to fathers in the utilization of the CSG in their paternal role are evaluated. The research demonstrates that no clear-cut answers can be provided, as the difference between respondents in their relation with the CSG presents a nuanced picture. The wide range and complexity of the answers in this research garners insight into both opportunities and limitations for fathers to use the CSG in their practice fatherhood.

In general, both the facilitating and constraining effects of the CSG on the father role remain modest. The CSG is largely associated with mothers and incorrect information about the grant is widespread among fathers. In order to draw further conclusions a distinction needs to be made between non-recipients, direct and indirect recipients of the CSG. This distinction is made because the findings differ between these subgroups and is based on different connections with the CSG; direct recipients are fathers who receive the grant on their name, indirect recipients are fathers who receive the benefit via a relative and non-recipients are fathers of which the CSG of their children is collected by someone else in the household. The former two categories represent single fathers who are primary caregivers and the latter category generally depicts fathers with partners who are not primary caregivers.

It was considered in the theoretical framework what the effects of the CSG might be on fathers and whether it is facilitating or constraining fatherhood. It is found that amongst non-recipients the CSG is largely not perceived as something that affects them in their fatherhood. The acquirement of the CSG in the household is not regarded as a changing factor for how

fathers fulfill their role. Even though it is understood as assistance to the household and a positive contribution to their children's well-being, its effects are not linked to their practice of fatherhood. As non-recipients dissociate the outcomes of the CSG with their own agency, it neither facilitates nor constrains this category of fathers to practice fatherhood roles positively.

Overall, indirect recipients do not recognize the CSG as something that influences their practice of fatherhood either, but the mechanisms in this category differ from non-recipients. Indirect recipients do receive the money themselves although the transfer is insecure as it occurs via relatives. The weak effects of the CSG on their fatherhood are possibly caused by the interference of relatives because it makes the opportunity to lay claim to the money more uncertain. Nevertheless, there is one feature of their practice of fatherhood that seems facilitated by the CSG; nurturance and the provision of care. The indirect recipients are primary caregivers and the CSG seems to assist them in performing care work. The potential effects of the CSG on fathers set out in the theoretical framework are not observed in this category.

For direct recipients the CSG has several facilitating effects on aspects of their positive practice of fatherhood. First, the grant appears to stimulate self-esteem as fathers feel better able to fill in their paternal role according to their wishes, which can boost their motivation. Second, paternal involvements that acquire financial resources seem facilitated by the CSG. Respondents indicate that it improves their ability to buy children a treat once in a while, take responsibility for children's well-being and it eases financial worries to meet children's needs. Third, in several ways the CSG facilitates the influence of direct recipients on their children. It appears to contribute their care work and they feel supported in economic provision. In this category the two facilitating tendencies of the CSG put forward in the theoretical chapter seem to be present. It makes them more confident that they can succeed as a father and it increases opportunities to spend time with their children.

Direct recipients associate the positive effects of the CSG on their practice of fatherhood with their own use of it. Consequently, directly receiving the CSG constitutes a factor that can enhance father's capabilities to practice fatherhood. However, being a direct recipient and receiving the benefits of the CSG as a father is not self-evident and widely considered to be abnormal. Even though the CSG enhances the capability of direct recipients to practice fatherhood, they collect it out of a kind of necessity; there is no one else to do it.

Opportunities to make a claim on the CSG as a father seem limited. Barriers make it difficult for fathers to use the CSG and convert it into capabilities to practice fatherhood. The first cluster of obstacles relate to prevalent gender norms and expectations in society. Previous research shows that high unemployment rates together with the dominant gender assumption that fathers should be providers produces weak capabilities for men to practice fatherhood (Khunou 2006; Redpath et al. 2008), which is confirmed in the current research. Also, the widespread notion that men should be breadwinners and women caregivers, make fathers less entitled to lay claim to the CSG. This is more evident amongst fathers who are not primary caregivers, however, it is found amongst primary caregivers as well, manifesting in different ways. Firstly, because gender rules are inherent to the CSG it has become ‘policy for women’ (Patel and Hochfeld 2011), which produces the impression amongst fathers that they should not get involved with it. Secondly, gender norms and expectations put pressure on fathers to be successful breadwinners. The inability of fathers to provide, due to unemployment and limited job opportunities, causes stress and decreases their capabilities to practice fatherhood. Instead of soothing this hardship, the CSG seems to underline failure amongst unemployed fathers in a vital part of their role. They view themselves and others as ‘weak’ because their families need assistance from the CSG.

Another barrier for fathers to make claims on the CSG relates to a bias respondents encounter against men in society. Fathers seem aware of the general negative image of men and fathers in society as a result of destructive masculine behavior. Consequently, fathers perceive their opportunities to receive social assistance as limited because of prejudice and aversion against men in social institutions. These preconceptions seem to make them less willing to seek out support in their practice of fatherhood. Additionally, the men that have been in contact with official institutions in order to get assistance as fathers have reported encounters with discrimination. The fact that some men behave badly seems generalized to all men. The dominant assumption that men would misuse social assistance has created institutionalized discrimination. As a result disadvantages and weak capabilities for men to practice fatherhood have been produced; this limits the freedom of fathers to use the CSG in their positive practice of fatherhood.

The answer to the main question in this research is multilayered. On the one hand, the CSG seems to facilitate aspects of the practice of fatherhood, yet merely if fathers are primary caregivers and receive the benefit themselves. Alternatively, where fathers are not the direct recipients a detachment from the influence of the CSG is found; the policy does not affect the

practice of fatherhood. Although directly receiving a CSG enhances men's capabilities to practice fatherhood, it is not perfunctory for men to be direct recipients. Social, economic and institutional barriers create weak capabilities for fathers and keep them from using the CSG in their positive practice of fatherhood.

Knowledge of the impact of the CSG has been broadened with this study on fathers. As seen in the theoretical framework, social policy typically entails intrinsic assumptions about gender roles and men and women are given different social rights (Orloff 1993). The CSG is aimed to be more progressive as it tries to break the pattern of social policy reinforcing gender roles (Patel and Hochfeld 2011). Even though it is designed to be gender neutral, people seem to apply their own gender rules to it. As it is a benefit for primary caregivers, fathers are largely excluded from it by themselves and others. The empowerment of primary caregivers, whom are mainly women, leaves fathers and the practice of fatherhood largely untargeted. The inclusion of fathers is a missing factor in the policy. The CSG does not challenge existing gender relations and is indirectly reinforcing gender roles and gender inequality, underlining the divide in tasks between mothers and fathers.

The capabilities approach of Amartya Sen used in this research provided a valuable angle to study the practice of fatherhood in relation to social policy in South Africa. Through the approach not just the outcomes of the CSG on fathers are investigated but a broad depiction of the opportunities and limitations to exercise social rights is presented. Without this approach only the weak effects of the CSG on fatherhood would have been shown. By applying the capabilities approach insight is given into the possibilities the CSG produces for fathers to act otherwise and alternatively the barriers they face in making a claim on it.

Implications of the research findings

Before formulating recommendations for policy and suggestions for further research, reflection is needed on the limitations of this research. First, direct and indirect recipients of the CSG are under-represented in the research population; however, they form an important part of the findings in the current research. It should be taken into account that their cases could be unique and that important mechanisms and dynamics regarding this category could have been missed. The second two limitations refer to the methodology; (1) findings are based on a small number of respondents what might have weakened the richness of the data and (2)

characteristics of the researcher, such as age, sex, culture, could have inflected a bias to the data.

With the limitations in mind, the findings of the current research can inform policymakers. Insight is given into effects of the CSG on poor fathers (direct recipients, indirect recipients and non-recipients), the opportunities for fathers to lay claim to the policy and alternatively the limitations to do so. Several recommendations for policy and society emerge out of the findings. First, it would be fruitful to promote government assistance amongst fathers; receiving aid as man is largely regarded as a weakness, a notion that should be altered. Creating public discussion and awareness about the struggles that fathers face could be a step in the right direction towards changing this outlook. When there is more public recognition of constraints placed on fathers, they might feel more legitimated to seek out help, which coincidentally might soothe the current issues around fatherhood.

Second, the CSG should be made more accessible for fathers. In the first place bias against men in public organizations should be investigated and reversed. Also, meetings could be organized for fathers to enhance their knowledge of the CSG: what the objectives are, who can apply for it, how to apply for it and what effect it can have on their lives. Care should be taken, however, that mothers are not consequently excluded from these meetings. As the use of the CSG is generally not shared between parents, either the mother is in charge or if that proves to be an impossibility the father, a meeting for only the fathers would render them counterproductive.

Third, in these meetings there should also be space to talk about gender roles and the division of tasks between parents. A dialogue can enhance communication between genders and create opportunities to rethink their gender roles. Acceptance of fathers performing other roles outside of the traditional task of being the breadwinner will improve their opportunities to succeed and feel successful as a father and can stimulate shared parenting.

Fourth, the development of programs especially for men seems relevant as well. Respondents in this research indicated to feel relieved after discussing issues in interviews and the focus group discussion. There is a demand for spaces where fathers can gather and share experiences and feelings, which would help them to channel frustrations and express despairs.

As this research is small in scope, further research on the investigated topics is needed. First, fathers who directly receive the CSG should be better studied. The results indicate that the

CSG creates opportunities to practice father roles positively for this group. The dynamics and mechanisms involved should be examined in detail with qualitative research. The characteristics of this group can be mapped with a quantitative survey. Second, more understanding should be gained on the barriers for fathers to be involved with the CSG. Increased knowledge on what these barriers entail, how they work and what their implications are for fathers would inform policymakers further. Third, further research should not focus on either mothers or fathers but on both parents. As gender identities are shaped in relation to each other, men and women also influence each other's relationship with social policy. In order to gain a comprehensive perspective on the relation of fathers with the CSG, mothers cannot be excluded.

The fact that fathers are urged to be more responsible on father's day in South Africa indicates increased attention for the current issues surrounding fatherhood in the country. I hope further research, public discussions and effort of both fathers and mothers, will bring positive fathering back in South African families. Hopefully at father's day in the near future fathers in South Africa are not just called upon to fulfill their role but celebrated for what they do and who they are.

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Appendix 1: Interview schedule

Introductory questions

What is your name?

What is your date of birth?

Are you working?

If yes, what is it that you do for a living?

Did you finish school? What was the highest grade? Any further study?

Are you married? Is it your first marriage? Living with a partner? Is it the mother of your child(ren)?

How many children do you have?

Boy(s) or girl(s)? How old are they?

Please tell me which children you live with and which ones you don't live with?

Please tell me if you live with the mother of any of your children?

Do you know how many of your children receive a CSG?

Since when do(es) your child(ren) receive the CSG?

Interview

Paternal involvements

1. When you are with your child(ren), what kind of things do you do? Can you give me some examples?
 - Playing
 - Caring
 - Helping with homework
 - Do sports
 - Teaching
2. If your child has a problem, (for example son/daughter is sick or gets involved in a fight), what normally happens? What do you do? Can you give me an example?
3. Can you explain what things you are responsible for your child(ren)? What are your duties as a father?
4. Could you help me understand what you think about when you worry about your child(ren)?
5. What are your hopes and dreams for your child(ren)?

CSG

6. Who collects the money of the CSG?
7. How is the money of the CSG spent?
8. As a father, do you think the CSG is a good thing? Why?
9. Has anything changed in your life as a father since your child(ren) receive(s) the CSG?

Capabilities

10. Can you help me understand what you like about being a father?
11. What are you proud of as a father?
12. Please help me understand what is difficult about being a father?
 - CSG
 - Poverty
 - Unemployment
 - Expectations
 - Own experiences
 - Migration
13. What helps you in being a proud father?
 - CSG
14. What would you need to do or to have in order to be a better father than you are now?

Motivation

15. Please explain me something about what you think makes a man a good father? What characteristics would a man who is a good father have?
16. Can you tell me if you raise your child(ren) as your own father raised you? In what ways? Why (not)?
17. Can you tell me in what ways you think your child(ren) need(s) you as a father?

Paternal influence

18. Do you correct your child(ren) if they do something wrong?
19. Are there things you want to teach to your children?
20. Could you help me understand who provides money for your child(ren) to live on?
 - Maintenance
21. Do you support the mother of your child(ren) financially?
 - Money for food
 - Money for clothing
 - Money for housing
22. Do you support the mother of your children in other ways?
 - Bringing child(ren) to school
 - Discussing issues about the child with the mother
 - Look after the child(ren)
23. Is the CSG helping you in taking care of your child(ren)? Why?

Appendix 2: Vignettes

Story 1

(Characters: Xolani (Father, 20 years old), Mpumi (Mother, 18 years old), Xolani's father, Xolani's mother and aunts, Mpho (Xolani's daughter))

- a. Xolani and Mpumi are in a relationship for a few months now. The other day Mpumi told Xolani that she is expecting his child. Xolani got really angry with Mpumi and told her he doesn't want to become a father. He doesn't know how to be a father because his own father was never there. Xolani's father had to work far away in the mines and never visited his family.

Prompts: What do you think of this situation?

What do you think of Xolani's behavior?

Why do you think Xolani doesn't want to become a father?

Can you understand that Xolani doesn't want to become a father?

Is it important for future fathers to have an own father as role model?

- b. Xolani's mother and aunts found out that Mpumi is pregnant. They got really angry with Xolani because he said to Mpumi that he doesn't want to be the father of the child. They tell him he mustn't be like all the other useless men in his family. They think Xolani has to be strong and that he must try to succeed as a father. Xolani doesn't want to disappoint his mother and aunts. So he decides that he wants to try his best to be a good father.

Prompts: What do you think about this situation?

What do you think of Xolani's mother and aunts?

Is it important that Xolani doesn't disappoint his mother and aunts?

Do you think Xolani will do his best now to be a good father?

- c. Mpumi gives birth to a baby girl: Mpho. When Xolani sees Mpho for the first time he knows he'll do everything to make her happy. But it proved difficult to make his daughter happy. He could hardly find work and Mpho often cries when she's hungry.

Fortunately, the family could get a Child Support Grant for Mpho every month. Now Xolani can buy enough milk for his daughter. With this small help from the government Xolani can make his daughter smile; he can succeed as a father.

Prompts: What do you think about this situation?

Do you think Xolani can succeed as a father with the help of the Child Support Grant?

Do you think the Child Support Grant can encourage fathers to be more involved?

Story 2

(Characters: Andile (Father, 41 years old), Thando (1st wife/mother, 42 years old), Janet (2nd wife/mother, 29 years old), three children from 1st wife/mother (5, 8 and 13 years old), one son from 2nd wife/mother, 3 years old)

- a. Andile lives with his first wife Thando and three children in Doornkop. Andile works in security and his three children in Doornkop receive Child Support Grants. Since they have this extra Child Support Grant money Thando thinks Andile can work a little less. She suggests that he should stay at home one day a week now, to look after the children. Andile has his doubts but he agrees because he likes to spend more time with his children.

Prompts: What do you think about this situation?

What do you think of Thando's suggestion?

Do you think Andile should go and work one day less to spend time with his children?

- b. Andile misses his second wife, Janet, and his son in KwaZulu-Natal a lot. He sends them money and he tries to call them whenever he has some airtime. Now that he is working one day less it becomes more difficult to support them. He had to cancel his monthly visit. Janet got really angry and said she will leave him.

Prompts: What do you think about this situation?

What do you think Andile should do now?

Do you think Janet is asking too much of Andile?

- c. Andile doesn't want to lose his second wife and son so he starts to work more again. His three children and wife in Doornkop are disappointed but Andile figures that it's

more important to provide for everyone financially than to sit and play with some of them.

Prompts: What do you think about this situation?

What do you think about the decision Andile made?

Do you also think it's more important for a father to provide financially than to sit and play with your children?

Story 3

(Characters: Karabo (35 years old), Zaila (29 years old), two children)

- a. Karabo and Zaila are together for 3 years and they have 2 children. One together and one from Zaila's previous partner. There is a specific division of tasks in their household. Zaila prepares the food, washes clothes, cleans the house and nurtures the children. Karabo is the provider, helps the children with their homework and teaches them respect. Zaila doesn't like this division and tells Karabo that he needs to help her more in the household. Karabo gets angry when Zaila tells him this; she should be grateful that he is maintaining and teaching the children.

Prompts: what do you think about this situation?

What do you think of this division of tasks?

Do you think Zaila has a right to complain?

- b. Two months later Karabo loses his job. Zaila applies for the Child Support Grant and collects the money every month. They disagree a lot about how to use the money. Zaila tells Karabo that only mothers can decide how to spend Child Support Grant money. She thinks he will use it for bad purposes such as buying beers.

Prompts: what do you think about this situation?

Why do you think they disagree a lot about how to use the money?

Is it fair that Zaila says that only mothers can decide how to spend Child Support Grant money?

- c. Now Karabo isn't working anymore he feels useless and ashamed in front of his wife and children. The next evening Zaila tells Karabo they don't need him anymore now she's getting the Child Support Grant. Karabo feels miserable about the situation. He

loves his children very much and he has the right to see them. He goes to the police but they tell him they can't do anything for him because he can't prove that he's their real father. Karabo starts drinking beers to forget about his worries.

Prompts: What do you think about this situation?

Can you understand that Karabo is feeling useless and ashamed now?

Why do you think the police doesn't help Karabo?

Story 4

(Characters: Vuyo (Father, 34 years old), Lilian (Grandmother, 55 years old), Daughter (6 years old), Son (4 years old))

- a. The mother of Vuyo's children has left them for another man. Vuyo is a single father now. His mother helps him sometimes to take care of the children. Vuyo doesn't have a permanent job. He walks every morning to Dobsonville to make money. When he comes back with some money his children are happy but when he returns empty-handed his children ignore him and leave the house to search for food outside. Vuyo doesn't feel like a father when that happens.

Prompts: What do you think about this situation?

What could Vuyo do about this situation?

- b. Vuyo goes to apply for the Child Support Grant but the officials send him away because he doesn't have the right documents. Vuyo thinks his request has been rejected only because he is a man so he returns there with his mother. This time they approved his request and Vuyo starts receiving Child Support Grants every month.

Prompts: What do you think about this situation?

Why do the officials reject Vuyo's request for the Child Support Grant?

Why do you think Vuyo's request was rejected the first time and approved the second time?

- c. The Child Support Grant money helps Vuyo with buying his children food and clothes. Now his children love him again. He doesn't care that his friends think grant money is only for women and children. With this help from the government he feels like a father again.

Prompts: What do you think about this situation?

Do you think it's good that Vuyo gets help from the Child Support Grant?

Why do his friends say Child Support Grant money is only for women and children?